

# SELECT SERMONS.

Preached upon sundry occasions

BY

JOHN FROST, B.D.

late Fellow of S. Johns Colledge in Cambridge, and since Pastor of the Church at S. Olaves-Hartstreet, London.

Now newly published together with two Positions for explication and confirmation of these Questions,

1. *Tota Christi justitia credentibus imputatur.*
2. *Fides justificat sub ratione instrumenti.*



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# SERMONS

By the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.  
of the Society of Friends, and of the  
University of Oxford.  
In two Volumes.  
The first Volume contains  
the Sermons preached at the  
Fetes of the University of Oxford.  
The second Volume contains  
the Sermons preached at the  
Fetes of the University of Oxford.



Printed by W. Lintell, Printer to the University.  
MDCCLXXII.

## To the READER.



Christian Reader, at the urgent importunity of some both Pious and Judicious, the relict of the Authour, with the consent of his nearest Relations, hath presented these Theses and Sermons to publick view (as is hoped) for thy good: and would have thee advertised, that these onely are all his labours as yet extant, or published to the world, and therefore none else to be owned as his, unless attested by the said Relations. If these few shall be found acceptable, and beneficial to thee, it is probable that more hereafter will be made publick in the same volume: in the mean time it is heartily wished that these may be as effectual to the Reader, as they were affectionately intended by the Speaker; and it is hoped then God will have glory, and his people good by them, which is the utmost aim of the publishing of them.

Farewel.



# To the READER.

William F. Carter, in the original impression of some Latin and English, the chief of the printer, with the consent of the printer, has printed the following list of errors and corrections to be made in the original impression. (as it appears) for the good of the reader, and the benefit of the world, and the more effect to be obtained by the said printer, if these few be found acceptable, and be made.

## Errata.

Page 3. line 2. medium, read modum. p. 10. l. 33. r. vita. p. 17. l. 10. cum, r. cum. p. 23. l. 2. r. Scripturae precept. p. 24. l. 10. r. dicitur. p. 26. l. 1. beard, r. hard. p. 36. l. 10. water, r. wages. p. 64. l. 1. thi, r. hi. l. 34. nos, r. no. p. 69. l. 16. intent, r. extent. p. 129. l. 30. r. dicitur. p. 131. l. 35. r. it is hard, that I say not impossible. p. 148. l. 18. r. he was at his. p. 150. l. 35. mean, r. meaness. p. 155. l. 34. r. unsuccessful. p. 189. l. 11. r. ense reci- p. 199. l. 36. went, r. will not. p. 207. l. 7. r. being by a. p. 211. l. 3. r. xlviii. p. 246. l. 12. r. qui, & xlviii. p. 267. l. 11. r. but principally and in joint efficiency. p. 273. l. 39; 40. r. it cost nothing in reference to us, though in reference to Christ's blood shed it was purchased, Eph. 1.7. p. 279. l. 30. date of. p. 280. l. 16. it, r. them. p. 283. l. 38. r. futurum. p. 311. l. 11. of, r. to wrath. p. 317. l. 24. it, r. are. p. 333. l. 17. of, r. in. p. 341. l. 20. in, r. into. 347. l. 1. shall, r. should. p. 354. l. 3. make it, r. make them.

Printed.

THESES  
DE TOTA  
CHRISTI JUSTITIA  
CREDITIBUS  
IMPUTATA,

*Quam*  
Sub præsidio Reverendissimi Viri  
JOANNIS ARROWSMITH  
S. T. D.

Ac in eadem Professoris Regii, 8. Kal. Februar.  
1654. in Scholis publicis  
CANTABRIGIÆ

Tuebatur  
JOANNES FROST,  
*Collegii D. Joannis ibidem Socius.*



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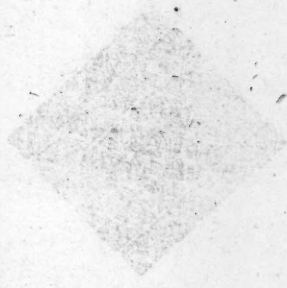


THE  
 DE TOT  
 CHRISTI IUSTITIA  
 CREDENTIBUS  
 IMPUTATA

Quam  
 Sub auspicio Reverendissimi Viri  
 JOHANNIS ARNOXII  
 S. T. D.

Ac in eadem Professoris Regii S. Kai. German.  
 1634. in schola publica  
 CANTABRIGIE

Thesaur.  
 JOHANNES ARNOXII  
 Collegii S. Joannis Regii Sacerdotis



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 Anno Domini MDCLVII  
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ORNATISSIMO DOCTIS-  
SIMOQUE VIRO

JOANNI ARROWSMITH,

SS. Theologiæ Doctori, & Collegii

SS. Trinitatis in Academia Cantabri-  
giensi Magistro.



Micorum quorundam importu-  
nitas impetravit tandem, Vir am-  
plissime, ut Posthumum hoc in  
publicum darem; & cui potius  
quàm dignitati tuæ dedicarem,  
cujus sub moderamine Author ipse haud ita  
pridem exercitium hoc Theologicum habuit.  
Vivum laudasti, mortuum defende: Post tu-  
um judicium formido nullum. Compenset  
hanc tuam benevolentiam *ὃ τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀγάπης* Deus  
æternante prosperitate. Et favere porrò nè de-  
sistas Authoris moestissimo Parenti,

*Vestræ tamen reverentiæ*

*& amplitudinis observantissimo,*

JOANN. FROST.



## O R A T I O

ante initam disputationem.

**S**umme Deus, misericors in Christo Pater, Cui debetur  
 unice, quod inter nuperas Ecclesie simul & Reipublice  
 ruinas nos, homunciones licet indignissimi, superstites hodie  
 sumus, quasi tot misericordie tue pracones & monumenta.  
 Gratias Tibi agimus, non quas debemus, sed quas possumus  
 maximas, quod sub alarum tuarum umbra ad hunc usque diem  
 in mediis procellis Academias protegisti, quod (oblatrante li-  
 cet invidia & ignorantia) nobis etiamnum indulges otium li-  
 terarium, quo nominis tui & veritatis gloriae, nostrum alio-  
 rumque saluti litare & invigilare possumus. Tu, Domine,  
 inhabitas lucem inaccessam, Tu lucis spiritualis fons unicus,  
 & Pater luminum; naturam fatemur nos meras tenebras, alta  
 ignorantiae nocte obvolutos, saxea circumgestamus corda, Tui  
 solius (omnipotens Deus) prerogativa est caecas mentes illu-  
 minare & corda adamantina emollire: nos ad pedes tuos hu-  
 millime provoluti oramus supplices, ut illucescas mentibus no-  
 stris luce Tua, ut animis Spiritu tuo afflatis, oculisque colly-  
 rio tuo inunctis, & mirabilia Legis & profunda Evangelii  
 indes scrutemur magis & intelligamus; atque ita potenter fleete  
 reluctantes animos, ut in obsequium Veritatis nos totos trada-  
 mus. Fac, quaesumus, ut sordidis iustitiae nostrae exuti pannis,  
 & Christi iustitiae stolam induiti, coram Te compareamus sin-  
 guli, necnon eam, de qua disputaturi sumus, intus in cordibus  
 nostris sentiamus discriminantem gratiam & fidem saluta-  
 rem. Ita denique conatus nostros inpraesentiarum, omniaque in  
 posterum secundes studia, ut cedant in nominis Tui gloriam,  
 Ecclesiae emolumentum, dilucidationem veritatis, fidei augmen-  
 tum ac robur, in salutari Christi cognitione profectum, aeter-  
 namque nostrum omnium salutem per Jesum Christum, olim in  
 terris, nunc a dextera Tua Salvatorem nostrum atque Intercesso-  
 rem, cui inter orandum confidamus unicum, cui Tecum una cum  
 Spiritu, Tri-uno Deo, sit laus & honos nunc & in aeternum.

## Thesis.

Tota Christi iustitia credentibus imputatur  
ad justificationem.



*Justificationis doctrinam solitus erat olim Luther Articulum stantis aut cadentis Ecclesiæ nominare: cujus dicti veritatem utinam Hereticorum, quotquot per retroacta secula fuere, aut jam nunc sunt, omnium iniquiora conamina plus satis non comprobassent; quibus, quæ facilius Ecclesiam Reformatam funditus evertant & Religionem nostram, altius radices agentem, ex hominum animis radicibus evellant, in hanc justificationis arcem, quasi totius fulcrum & propugnaculum, solenne semper fuit totam convertere argumentorum molem & ingeniorum aciem, hanc præcipue imputationis iustitiæ Christi Acropolin Sociniani, Remonstrantes, & Pontificii totâ vi aggrediuntur, & quam argumentis & rationibus pesundare non possunt & labefactare, calumniis onerant & dictæis insectantur, quæ singula si recensere, & patientia vestra lassitudinem, & piis auribus nauseam & tadium crearem. Pontificii, ad unum penè omnes, hanc iustitiæ imputativam ut putativam & imaginariam sugillant. [Bellarminus (tom. 4. c. 7. l. 2.) imputationis dogma ut ἀναγορεύει, quod nullum in Scripturis aut Patribus testimonium habeat, ut non necessarium, ut absurdissimum, ut rectæ rationi contrarium insectatur. Ingeniosus iste nequam Castellio, in Tractatu de Justificatione, hanc imputativam iustitiæ ut imaginariam, pag. 17. ut inane nomen iustitiæ, pag. 31. ut carni suavem calumniatur. Lessius, ejusdem farinae homuncio, in consultatione de Relig. consideratione 3. inter alios nostra Religionis Articulos pietati (ut contendit) contrarios, hunc de iustitiâ imputata enumerat, quasi necesse esset ut omnem Dei timorem excutiant, dum docent (ipsius sunt verba) per fidem peccata non imputari, quantumvis ea sunt multa vel magna. Andræus eam vocat amenitissimam insaniam, pag. 477. in defensione fidei Tridentinæ. Sanderus dicit hanc imputationem officere gloriæ Dei & Christi. Salmero rejicit ut superfluum, ut superbiæ matrem, quia, inquit, ponit servos Domini sui gloriam usurpare. Rainoldus eam vocat Mathematicum solidivum commentum, p. 324. contra Whitakerum nostrum.*



nostrum. *Quin insuper eos omnes anathematis fulmine percutit conventus Tridentinus (sess. 6. can. 10.) qui dixerint homines per iustitiam Christi formaliter esse justos. At in hanc Christi iustitiam paulò iniquiores extiterunt, jurati illi Christi hostes, Sociniani. Socinus ipse parte 4. c. 4. de Christo Servatore, commentum vocat iustitia Christi nobis imputata, quam nec Moses nec Paulus nè somniavit quidem; cap. 1. ejusdem libri, Commentum, inquit, ut valde absurdum atque impium, ità intolerabile; c. 8. Non ipsis solùm sacris litteris, sed rationi planè repugnat; & cap. 1. dicit nos huic opinioni adhærere cum salutis nostræ discrimine, adeò foeda atque execrabilis est, ut pestilentiorum errorem post homines natos extitisse non credam. Simalcius, Magistrum secutus, hanc doctrinā vocat Satanæ imposturā. Horum vestigia premunt Remonstrantes, unum pro omnibus accipite Episcopium, qui, concione secundā, pag. 437. de causis incredulitatis Judæorum, tria enumerat doctrina nostræ capita, viz. Trinitatis, absolutæ prædestinationis, & justificationis per iustitiam Christi, quæ impedimento esse Judæis & offendiculo ait, quò minùs fidem Christianam amplectantur, quasi per hanc iustitiam imputativam actum esset de legis obedientia & studio bonorū operum; & reverà, inquit, ità se res habet: & posset certè Apostolus & viro Arminiano & Judæis satisfacere, qui sapius de industria justificationis doctrinam ab hac criminatione liberat, ad Rom. 3. 31. Legem igitur inutilem reddimus per fidem? absit, imò legem stabilimus; & cap. 8. 4. dicit Apostolus per Christi iustitiam legem in nobis compleri.*

*Audiivistis, Academici, homines ad convitia ingeniosos satis, qui fortiter calumniari didicerunt, ut tandem aliquid hæreat. Aggredior quaestionem, uti persciscitis, criminationibus vexatam, calumniis onustam & penè obrutam; quæ efficere potuissent, ut causa prævaricaretur, nisi præluxisset mihi Scripturæ lumen, quo, vel in thesi, vel inter disputandum, totam illam calumniarum noctem, quam huic veritati offundunt hujus seculi tenebriones, discutere nullus dubito. Quinetiam gratiam divinam & misericordiam, quā, cū primavā iustitiā excideramus, vicariam hanc Christi iustitiam credentibus nobis præparavit, acceptat, ac in iustitiam imputat, ex intimo corde non possum non suscipere & amplecti: neque facillè mihi persuaserim veritatem ex eorum partibus stare, qui suā quasi diffusi causa mallet aliorum opiniones vellicare & contumeliis proscindere (quæ Socinianorum in singulis Religionis capitibus consuetudo est) quàm suam argumentis evincere & statuminare. Afferō igitur (obtrectantibus licet Hæreticis) totam Christi iustitiam imputari credentibus ad justificationem: Quam ut felicius veritatem explicem, proponam*

*1. Terminorum explicationem; 2. Quaestionis statum; 3. Conclusiones & argumentorum momenta. Quæ singula eā, quam rei majestas*

jestas patitur, brevitate, & quam nostra tenuitas, perspicuitate absolvam. Quod ad terminos attinet:

Primo, per justitiam Christi intelligi velim non essentialem illam & Ofiandricam Christi, viz. quâ Deus est, sed mediatoriam, quâ <sup>ὡς ἀντισπότης</sup> Mediator & Sponsor noster extitit, quâ sapius in Scriptura vocatur justitia Dei, ut Rom. 1. 17. & 10. 3. viz. vel ratione gratuitæ donationis, & acceptationis, quippe quâ sola in iudicio Dei valet, vel perfectæ adæquationis ad divinam voluntatem, vel revelationis, quippe de qua acutissimi Philosophi ne somniarunt unquam, vel originis, quippe à Christo præstita, qui & Deus & homo erat, vocatur justitia Christi subjective, justitia fidei Phil. 3. 9. instrumentaliter & objective, de quo fusiùs agemus postea.

Secundo, terminus iste tota non sumitur in quaestione extensive, & quoad meriti & efficacia latitudinem, ita enim unicuique credenti non imputatur, sed limitatè, ut pretium particulare, & quantum credentis postulat necessitas. Unde obiter constabit quàm inanis est ista Bellarmini calumnia, quâ hanc imputationem prosequitur, quasi nos nimirum Christo pares & ex aquo iustos esse exinde sequeretur, & verè nos dici posse Redemptores & Mediatōres: In promptu est responsio, viz. Justitiam Christi quàm longissimè superare Adami, omniumque creaturarum justitiam, & ejus satisfactionem & mortem esse universale omnibus credentibus redemptionis pretium, at fide recipi solam, in quantum sufficit ad particularis hominis justificationem, perinde cum Christo iustos credentes dicimus, quoad veritatem, non quantitatem & subjectum, deinde Mediator est nomen officii, cuius nos participes non sumus, sed justitia ex actibus mediatoris resultantis. Per totam igitur justitiam intelligimus tum activam, impletionem viz. legis à Christo præstitam, à cuius exactissima obedientia ne tantillum per totam vitam deflexerit, tum passivam, per quam intelligi velim non nudam corporis mortem, cui tamen in Scriptura sapius justificatio nostra Synechdoche & quâ <sup>ἐξ ὧν</sup> attribuitur, utpote extrema obedientia complemento, sine qua nihil nobis obedientia Christi profuisset (utpote quam lex violata indispensabiliter vel à peccatore vel sponsore postulabat) sed totam Christi humiliationem, ipsam formam humilis & servi assumptionem, omnesque & corporis arumnas animique dolores, quos à primis incunabulis ad glorificationem usque pertulit, quos nostro loco ferebat, ut per utramque justitiam tum mandatis tum minis legis omni ex parte satisfiat. Neque est quare habitualement seu originale Christi justitiam, quâ tota humanitas Christi à prima conceptione perfusa erat, à justificatione nostra (quod nonnulli faciunt Theologi) excludamus, cum hac nativâ nostra corruptioni, uti activâ peccatis actualibus, & passivâ pœnis, quas commerceramus & ex rigore legis luere debuissimus, aptissime respondeat. Monendum hic est hanc distinctionem esse modalem, seu eiusdem rei in di-

versas



versas considerationes, quippe & impletio legis & persolutio periarum unicam de integro constituent iustitiam quâ iustificamur, ad quam non valet ipsa Christi passio, nisi ut voluntarie suscepta & praestita, & in tantum activæ nomen meretur, subdistinguitur ut ait Davenantius inquit Apostolus, Phil. 2:8.

Tertio, Imputatur.] Imputationis naturam apertissime explicat Davenantijs, Res imputantur (inquit p. 372.) quando illarû intuitus & respectus valent nobis ad aliquem effectum æquæ ac si à nobis aut in nobis essent: ita ex intuitu nostri peccati, quod Christo imputabatur, cum Christo Deus egit, licet innocentissimo, ac si revera peccator fuisset: ita imputatâ nobis Christi iustitiâ, nobiscum agit Deus ac si iusti essemus. Ex intuitu activæ obedientiæ nos respicit, ac si propriis personis legem implevissemus, & ex intuitu passivæ, ac si penam peccato debitas dedissemus: ideoque per iustitiam Christi imputatam nihil aliud intelligimus quàm eam donatam nobis & applicatam ad spiritualem aliquem effectum producendum, ut persolutio debiti à sponsore facta à creditore ita debitori imputatur, ut ejus respectu debitorem manumittit, perinde ac si ipse solvisset debitum. Huic respondet verbum Græcum *λογίζω*, de quo mirum quantas Pontificii rixas movent: sed, modo rem tenemus, absint *λογίζω*, quibus vestra veras patientia ne longius immoraret. Hinc obiter constare potest, quàm protervè & malitiosè nobiscum agunt Pontificii, quasi imaginariam solam poneremus iustitiam, ut justificationis nostræ materiam coram Deo; & imputationem, nudam solummodo existimationem, quod in nos urget Bellarminus, qui semper opponit verè & imputative: & Castellio nostros exagitat Theologos ut Christi modestiâ, vel opinione modestos nos esse, ut Christi iustitiâ iustos; pag. 32. Absurdissimum viz. existimant, aliquem alienâ iustitiâ justum fore. At mera hæc nuga sunt, & deliria: non enim asserimus nos iustos iustitiâ prorsus alienâ, sed quæ verè sit nostra, veritate imputationis, licet non inhærentis; & hanc imputationem esse existimationem, cui veritas in re ipsa respondet; & hanc iustitiam realiter fieri nostram; 1. donatione; 2. promissione; 3. acceptatione Dei; 4. applicatione fidei, quæ realis est, non putativa: hæc imputatio causam habet realem, Dei viz. fœdus & voluntatem; fundamentum reale, nimirum Christi perfectissimam obedientiam nostro loco praestitam, & à nobis propter nostram cum Christo unionem participatam; ob quam iusti habemur coram Deo, non quidem inhærentè, sed per habitudinem ad Christum, cuius iustitia sit nostra ex parte Dei per imputationem, ex parte nostra per fidem: idè additur in quaestione

Quarto, Credentibus.] Qui terminus quadruplicem habet emphasim & vim in præsentî quaestione.

Primo, ut dicat instrumentum: non enim dicimus fidem iustificare

for m-



formaliter cum Socinianis, neque dispositivè solum cum Pontificiis, sed per medium instrumenti, non quidem naturalis, sed ex divina ordinatione, quâ ex summa sapientia instituere hoc justificationis medium, viz. fidem, quæ passivam & receptivam habet aptitudinem respectu objecti justificationis præ aliis omnibus virtutibus.

Secundo, ut dicat actum fidei: non enim amplector Maccovii sententiam, asserentis, fidem habitualement illud esse, quo justificamur, pag. 770. quia fides non aliter justificat quàm relativè, & connotativè ad objectum, aliter enim suo merito, propriâque virtute justificaret, aut notum est, habitus nullum dicere respectum ad objecta, nisi median-  
tibus actibus. Unde obiter etiam monere possim, me nihil de infantum justificatione impræsentiarum determinaturum, quippe quibus justificationis privilegium modo quodam latentiori communicatur.

Tertio, ut dicat momentum justificationis nostræ; viz. quamprimum in Christo credimus: non enim iis assentior, qui justificationem ponunt fidei antecedentem, nimirum, vel ab æterno, vel pretii per Christi mortem persolutio, vel ab ipso tempore quo Christus promissus nobis est in Mediatorem, Gen. 3. 15. quæ Maccovii opinio est, qui fidem non aliter justificare existimat, quàm quoad sensum nostrum, quod nimirum fide cognoscimus, & sentimus nos esse justos coram Deo, pag. 792. quippe Scriptura judicat omnes, ut filios iræ, antecedenter ad fidem, Ephes. 2. 3. quid? quod opera, aliæque virtutes, ut justificationis remedia, nos justos declarant coram Deo. Agnoscimus virtutalem justificationem, quoad præscientiam & voluntatem divinam ab æterno, meritoriam pretio persoluta, at actualement & formalem justificationem antecedenter ad fidem non agnoscimus. Neque enim decretum justificationis est ipsa justificatio, neque ad hanc sufficit pretii datio: quo modo nostram Socinus deridiculo habet fidem, quasi fide diceremus nos credere dari, quod jam à Christo datum est, (p. 4. c. 3.) cum tamen nos profiteamur fide opus esse, non ad solutionem sed ad applicationem: non est idem justitiam imputari, & Christum pro nobis justum esse: quæ duo tamen Socinus pessimè confundit, qui arguit à positione satisfactionis ad negationem imputationis, licet enim prius per Christum parata est justitia, nobis tamen non cedit in justificationem, priusquam fide applicamus. Res simili constabit: ut quis debitor absolvatur, requiritur 1. ut sponsor persolvat debitum. 2. ut creditor in ea acquiescat. 3. ut debitor eandem solutionem acceptet, & sibi propriam faciat: ita ut nos rei peccatores absolvamur à reatu, & justificemur, non solum requiritur persolutio debiti, à Christo facta, sed desideratur insuper acceptatio, & imputatio Patris, & applicatio fidei: hinc est quod sapissime justificatio fidei ascribitur, Rom. 5. 1. & passim in Scripturis; & quousque increduli manemus, ira Dei dicitur super nos manere, Joan. 3. 36.

Quarto, ut designet identitatem justificationis sub utroque Testamento,

mento, contra Socinianum istud dogma, De fide in Deum sub Veteri, & in Christum sub Novo Testamento: Cum tamen Apostolus ad Rom. 4. cum ver. 3. dixisset, Abrahamum credidisse, & imputatum esse ei ad iustitiam: versibus 23, 24. addit, Scriptum hoc esse propter nos, quibus futurum est, ut imputetur ea. Unde luculenter constat, eundem modum per eandem fidem utrobique factam peccatoris justificationem, qui ultimus quæstionis terminus.

Quintò, Ad justificationem: ] hoc est, ut ejus iustitiæ participes facti credentes, & pro iustis à Deo habeantur; & peccatorum remissionem recipiant, ita ut huius intuitu, Deus eos & à peccatorum reatu absolvat, & iustos pronunciet: (hac enim justificationis vox includit, ut infra patebit). Non dissimulandum est, ortas hac etiam de re inter nostros Theologos controversias, dum alii remissionem peccatorum asserunt esse effectum imputationis iustitiæ passivæ, ut Piscator, & qui eum sequuntur: alii utriusque iustitiæ effectum esse contendunt, ut Calvinus, & Chamierus, p. 193. de quibus infra erit opportuniter determinandi locus. Interea hac sufficiant ad terminorum explicationem. Quæstionis statum iam aggredior.

Sententiæ  
quatuor de  
Justificati-  
one.

Sentent. 1.

Sentent. 2.

Quatuor præcipuas & celebriores observavi de imputatione Doctõrũ sententias. Prima est eorum, qui satisfactionis, & meriti Christi ultro agnoscunt imputationem, non autem ut sit nostra coram Deo iustitia, sed ut valeat ad impetrandam iustitiam inhærentem, quâ formaliter iustificemur: hac Bellarmini, & recepta est Pontificiorum sententia.

Secunda est eorum, qui omnem iustitiæ Christi imputationem de medio tollunt: sed fidem volunt esse ipsam iustitiam imputatam (loco illo Apostoli ad Rom. 4. 4. *in* *intellecto*) quam ex divina acceptilatione perinde valere aiunt cum iustitia perfectâ, & legi omnimodè adæquatâ. Audite ipsum Socinum, lib. 4. c. 4. de Servatore: ubi rationem exhibens quare fides dicitur imputari Abrahamo: Quia, inquit, Deo visum est fidem nostram iustitiæ loco nobis ducere: & cap. 8. Non aliam, inquit, præterea imputationem in salute nostra æterna intervenire agnoscendum, quàm pro iustis haberi à Deo, quicunq; ex Christi præscripto, ipsi ex animo obedirent. Confundunt viz. Sociniani fidem cum obedientia. Smalcus disp. 4. contra Fratziũ, Licet, inquit, fides nostra non mereatur vitam æternam, tamen Deus ita in ea acquiescit, ac si vitam æternam mereatur. Cui sententiæ affine est illud decantatum à credere Arminianorum, hoc solum (quantum ego intelligo) cum discrimine: quòd Arminiani agnoscunt iustitiam Christi ut causam meritoriam, quam Sociniani prorsus repudiant. Ipsum, si placet, audite Arminium, Epist. ad Hypol. Dico, inquit, fidem imputari propter Christum & iustitiam ejus: In qua enuntiatione fides est objectum imputationis, Christus verò, & obedientia ejus est causa justificationis impetratoria, & meritoria, quia Christus cum obedi-



obedientia sua est objectum nostræ fidei, & non objectum justificationis, & imputationis divinæ, quasi Deus nobis Christi justitiam imputat ad justitiam, quod fieri nequit. *Hec Arminius.*  
*Tertia est eorum, qui Christum satisfecisse, & mortem nostro loco sub-*  
*isse existimant, ita ut hac loco justitia nobis imputatur, cujus consequens*  
*ponunt peccatorum remissionem, in qua sola statuunt justificationem*  
*nostram: nostro autem loco Christum legem implevisse, vel ejus obedi-*  
*entiam activam imputari ad justitiam prorsus negant. Hec Piscato-*  
*ris, Forbesii, Wottoni, Windelini, Hammondi, aliorumque opinio*  
*est. Hi scilicet, dum pro veritate militant, inutilem justitiam Christi to-*  
*gam dilacerant, & dividunt, dum Sociniani & Pontificii propriis su-*  
*perbiunt justitiæ pannis: ipsi Sociniani, licet utriusque imputationem*  
*negant & rident, in activam tamen vehementius invehuntur: multo*  
*magis quam poenarum persolutio detestanda est Christi justitiæ im-*  
*putatio. Verba sunt Socini, cap. 4. lib. 4. de Servatore.*

Sentent. 3.

*Quarta est eorum, qui utriusque justitiæ imputationem propugnant, &*  
*tuentur, & quod utraq; sit nostræ justificationis materia coram Deo, & co-*  
*dem prorsus modo imputata credentibus, idem Deum ut respicit credentes in*  
*Christo moriente, quasi ipsi dedissent pœnas; ita in eodem Sponsore Chri-*  
*stia, legem adimplente, quasi ipsi perfecte implevisse, & utraque simul*  
*ad perfectam justificationem imputatur. Fatentur quidquid sunt Theo-*  
*logi activæ obedientiæ necessitatem. Sociniani, ad exemplum. 2. A-*  
*lii, ut sit conditio requisita in persona Mediatoris & Sacerdotis. 3. Ut*  
*ob hanc sincera nostra obedientia grata Deo sit, & accepta: ita Ham-*  
*mondus. 4. Ut sit nostra coram Deo justitiæ à Deo donata loco nostro*  
*præstita, & fide apprehensa & applicata: hac doctissimorum Theolo-*  
*gorum mens est, & sententia; Chamieri, Maccovii, Scarpæ, Polani,*  
*Riveti, Gomari, Dounami, &c. et, unius instar omnium, Davenantii.*  
*Quibus ego in præsentiarum meum adjicio calculum, dum assero, Totam*  
*Christi justitiam credentibus imputari ad justificationem. Hæc bre-*  
*viter et succinctè de questionis statu: sequuntur quatuor conclusiones*  
*pari brevitate discutiendæ.*

Sentent. 4.

*Prima Conclusio. Justitiæ nostræ non valet ad justificationem co-*  
*ram Deo. Cum autem ea duplex est, Habitualis, sive inhærens; A-*  
*ctualis et exercita: utramque excludimus ab aliqua causalitate, sive ef-*  
*ficiente, sive formali in nostræ justificatione. In hac conclusione litem*  
*intendimus Pontificiis, qui Concilium Tridentinum sequuti, justiti-*  
*am inhærentem et operum statuunt justificationis nostræ causam co-*  
*ram Deo, dum nostram de imputatione doctrinam vellicant, ac si omni*  
*prorsus justitiæ inhærentem, et studium sanctitatis inane redderet, et*  
*frustraneum. Hoc jactò prius fundamento, procedit tota Castellionis*  
*disputatio de justificatione, qui ( quasi nos omnem realem justitiæ de*  
*medio tolleremus ) dicit, pag. 13. Hoc ostendere Christi vel infirmi-*

Conclus. i.



tatem, si non posset; vel malignitatem, si non vult nos inhaerenter & verè justos efficere.

Eadem nostram onerat sententiam calumniâ Socinus, lib. 4. cap. 4. de Servatore: Ut salvi simus, inquit, non necesse est, ut à vitiis verè abstineamus, sed ut abstinuisse censeamur. Ut utrique calumnia occurramus, has brevissimè propono Theses et Theoremata.

Thesis 1.

Primo dicimus, Inseparabiliter conjunctam esse iustitiam imputativam, et inhaerentem: et Christum simul factum esse credenti et justificationem et sanctificationem, affirmante Apostolo, 1 Cor. 1. 30.

Thesis 2.

Secundo dicimus, Frustra & temerariè sibi de iustitia Christi ad blandiri, qui sanctitati operam non dat, & studio bonorum operum: quippe fidem istam, quâ Christus apprehenditur, profitemur eam Apostolo esse operantem per charitatem, Gal. 5. 6.

Thesis 3.

Tertio dicimus, Per utramque iustitiam, inhaerentem videlicet & imputatam nos verè justos denominari: hâc relativè & perfectè, illâ inchoatè, subjectivè, & imperfectè.

Thesis 4.

Quarto, Agnoscimus iustitia inhaerenti & actuali suam conferri mercedem, non autem ex merito, sed ex gratia.

Thesis 5.

Quinto, Fatemur hanc iustitiam valere ad nostram justificationem coram hominibus, quippe quæ fructus, & terminus est justificationis, licet non coram Deo: quam distinctionem apertissimè innuit Apostolus, Gal. 3. 12. et vobis estis digni tamen non Dei: operibus legis declarativè justificari coram hominibus nusquam negat Apostolus.

Thesis 6.

Sexto dicimus, Hanc iustitiam Deo placere & gratam esse, non autem ex suo merito & dignitate, sed ut effectus Spiritûs, & ex gratia Dei, ob meritum, & iustitiam Mediatoris.

Thesis 7.

Septimò, Agnoscimus iustitiam operum esse ornamentum conversationis, necessaria antecedentia salutis, fructus fidei justificantis, cui tum ex legis, & voluntatis divina obligatione, tum ex debito gratitudinis studere debemus. Interim,

Thesis 8.

Octavo, Negamus hanc iustitiam esse formam nostræ justificationis, vel eam, ob quam Deus nos justos pronuntiat, & ad vitam æternam acceptare dignatur. Idque hoc duplici ducti argumento:

Arg. 1.

1. Hac sententia Pontificiorum repugnat & voci, & naturæ justificationis, quæ passim in Scripturis designat forensiæ, & judicialem absolutionem, & acceptionem, non infusionem inhaerentis iustitiæ: si enim hoc præ se fert justificatio, opus Deo gratum proculdubio efficeret, quàm quod gratissimum, qui impium justificaret, qui tamen, Prov. 17. 15. dicitur esse abominationi Jehovæ. Pontificiis etiam repugnat vis vocis Gracia, quæ semper denotat sententiæ pronuntiationem, non iustitiæ infusionem, utpote quæ in Scripturis opponitur etiam iustitiæ, in iudicium vocare, & condemnare; at quis sanus affirmaret condemnationem esse iniustitiæ infusionem,

&

Et non patitur morti adjudicationem, cui cum ex diametro opponitur justificatio, necessario designat non infusionem, sed abolitionem peccati, et acceptationem ad vitam.

II. Non valet nostra justitia ad justificationem coram Deo, quia ea omnia, quae in ea justitia, quā possumus in conspectu Dei justificari, requiruntur, in nostra quali quali justitia desiderantur. In ea enim, quā quis justificari potest, justitia requiritur.

Arg. 2.

1. Omnimoda et absolutissima perfectio, quam postulat tum Dei sanctitas, tum legis indispensabilis obligatio.

2. Adequatio ad legem, et voluntatem divinam: eaque tum, 1. Extensiva, tum ratione objecti, praeceptorum viz. et negativorum, quibus opponuntur commissionis peccata, et affirmativorum, quibus repugnant omissiones; Apostolus enim cum reum factum esse omnium pronuntiat, qui in uno impegit, Jacobi. 2. 10. tum ratione temporis et durationis. Ei enimvero, qui semel à legis norma aberraverit, ut per legem justificetur impossibile prorsus est, quippe qui, juxta legis rigorem et sententiam, morti et condemnationi adjudicatur, Gal. 3. 10. neque potest nostra perfectissima justitia injuriam divinae Majestati per minimam legis transgressionem illatam compensare. 2. Intensiva, ratione subjecti, ut fiat toto corde, et tota anima, ut nè tantillum à debita intentione deficiat: nullibi autem reperiri tam perfectam justitiam, ut plenissime demonstramus, fidenter appellamus Scripturas, et sanctissimorum hominum conscientias. Scriptura eum mendacem pronuntians, qui se peccatum habere non dixerit, 1 Joan. 1. 8. Supposito autem vel semel commisso peccato, perfectissima nostra obedientia ejus reatum tollere non potest: quid? quod justitia nostra inhærens reliquiis peccati fundatur, et justitia operum plurimis laborat infirmitatibus, notat Jac. 2. 26. inquit Apostolus, Jac. 3. 2. Quod si Sanctorum experientiam attestamus, Davidem videre est Dei severitatē seriò deprecantem, Psal. 143. 2. Nè congregiaris, inquit, in judicio cum servo tuo, nam non esset justus coram te ullus vivens. Paulum habemus se confitentem peccatorum maximum, 1 Tim. 1. 15. Imò se faterur exinde non justificari, licet nullius rei sibi conscius est, 1 Cor. 4. 4. Jobum, Danielelem habemus in Scripturis peccata sua confitentes: Paulum sepius justitiae suae renuntiantem, Phil. 3. 8, 9. Imò totam Ecclesiam legimus, suam aestimantem justitiam, ut panniculum abjectissimum, Isa. 64. 6. Imò, ipsos testes advocamus adversarios, qui non ausi sint in sua justitia coram tribunali Dei se sistere. Notum est illud Bellarmini, Tutissimum est, &c. At multiplex habent adversarii refugium. Pontificii dicunt, Scripturas à justificatione excludere solum opera legis Cereemonialis, vel à natura praestitas. Cui opinioni repugnat quod Apostolus opera credentis Abrahami à justificatione removeret, ad Rom. 4. 3. At Christi merito debemus (inquiunt Pontificii) quod hac justitia valeat ad



justificationem; at hoc reverà elevat meritum, & iustitiam Christi, quasi ad nostram redemptionem per se non sufficeret. Confugium denique ad acceptilationem divinam, quasi propter Christi iustitiam Deus nostram, imperfectam licet iustitiam, loco perfectam haberet; quæ opinio necessario ponit, vel legis, ex parte saltem, abrogationem, quasi eam, quam prius, iustitiam non postularet; vel Deum insinuat fallibilis iudicii, & falsæ existimationis, quippe qui imperfectam loco perfectam iustitia duceret, quod parum abest à blasphemia, Rom. 7. 2.

**Conclus. 2.**

**Conclusio secunda.** Justificatio peccatoris coram Deo fit per imputationem iustitiæ: cuius conclusionis veritas ex antedictis patet; quippe cum inhærens iustitia impar sit ad hunc effectum producendum, opus erit iustitiâ alienâ, & nobis imputatâ: tertium enim justificationis modum Adversariarum acutissimi excogitare non potuerunt. Hac conclusio contra eos militat, qui justificationis naturam in solitaria & nuda peccatorum remissione ponunt, quæ Piscatoris sententia est, & aliorum, quotquot sunt, omnium, qui activæ Christi obedientiæ imputationem negant. Ultrò fatemur, peccatorum remissionem esse partem justificationis integrantem, & cum imputatione inseparabiliter conjunctam, at solam remissionem ad nostram justificationem sufficere negamus, tum quia Scripturæ sapius loquuntur de remissione & imputatione, ut distinctis per Christum impetratis, & collatis beneficiis: ut videre est ad Rom. 4. 7, 8. ut olim de Christo Daniel prophetavit: fore viz. ut expiet iniquitatem, & adducat iustitiam perpetuam, Dan. 9. 24. Neutra per se valet ad nostram justificationem & salutem. Poenæ, quam commervimus, respondet peccatorum remissio; culpæ, quam contraximus, iustitiæ imputatio: per remissionem tollitur obligatio ad mortem; per imputationem communicatur iustitia ad vitam: remissio liberat à damnatione; imputatio iustitiæ dat jus ad salutem: remissio efficit non injustos, imputatio verè justos, quod indispensabiliter requiritur, ut vitam assequamur: remissio peccati reatum tollit, non maculam; hac autem ut removeatur necessum est, priusquam possidere possimus istud cæleste regnum, in quod non intrabit quidquam, quod inquinat, Apoc. 21. 27. Ipsi Adamo vitam non debebatur, ex eo quod reatus expers fuit; sed ex perfectâ obedientiâ, & perseverantis iustitiæ conditione. Cujus in Protoplasto defectum sequuta est, & in totam posteritatem derivata, & obligatio ad omne genus mortem, omnisque iustitiæ privatio. Cui duplici malo medetur peccatorum remissio, quæ tollit obligationem ad mortem, & iustitiæ imputatio, quæ primæ rectitudinis & perfectæ obedientiæ locum & vim supplet. Supponamus hominem per non imputationem peccatorum restitui in pristinum statum, quo culpâ vacabat, & unde per peccatum exciderat, at in isto statu desiderabatur insuper perfectâ & illibata sanctimonia, & legis impletio (quam etiamnum ad vitam æternam postulant Dei sanctitas



*Etas, legis obligatio, cælestis hereditatis conditio, & qualitas) quam cum nos præstare non possumus, opus erit alterius, Mediatoris viz. iustitiæ imputatæ, quâ coram Deo iusti habeamur, & ad vitam æternam acceptemur; quod fit, non solum adoptionis jure, & titulo; sed justificationis, quam ideo vocat Apostolus δικαιοσύνη, Rom. 5. 18.*

*Conclusio tertia. Justificatio peccatoris fit per imputationem iustitiæ Christi: quam imputationem acriter impugnât Bellarminus, lib. 2. cap. 7. de justificat. & quasi ἀρεστος dogma uno ore clamitant Pontificii, & Sociniani. Paucis igitur videamus, quibus & Scriptura testimoniis, & rationum momentis statuminari potest hæc sententia. Passim depradicat Scriptura illam iustitiā nostram, & nos in ea iustos pronuntiat, quod aliter quam per imputationem fieri ἀδύνατον prorsus & impossibile. Hinc Christus factus dicitur credentibus δικαιοσύνην, I Cor. 1. 30. non inhærenter, vel effectivè solum, illud enim in proximo termino exprimitur, cum Christus factus nobis dicitur ἁγιασμός sanctificatio: beatum eum depradicat David, cui Deus iustitiā imputat, ut ab Apostolo citatur, Rom. 4. 6. Non nostram intelligit Apostolus, quippe imputari dicitur ῥαῖς ἔργων, absque operibus; & Deus justificare dicitur ὁ θεός, v. 5. ergo non ex propria iustitiā intuitu. Itā Rom. 5. 18. dicimur iusti constituti δι' ἑνὸς δικαιοῦματος, siue unius hominis, viz. Christi; vel unam iustitiā, hoc est, perfectam & consummatam intelligamus perinde est, quippe utroque modo Christi imputatam iustitiā designat: Itā 2 Cor. 5. 21. fieri dicimur δικαιοσύνην Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ, non inhærenter in nobis, sed in Christo imputativè, hinc sæpius repetita Prophetarum vaticinia de Christo, iustitiā nostrā, Jer. 33. 16. 23. 6. &c. Hinc etiam justificatio per Christum semper opponitur operibus legis, & iustitiæ nostræ: quid? quod ea, quâ justificamur, iustitiā δικαιοσύνην Θεοῦ sæpius appellatur, non causativè solum, itā enim legis iustitiā, & inherens Dei est iustitiā, cui tamen è diametro sæpius opponitur, quod ad justificationem attinet, fidei, & Christi iustitiā, ut apertissimè constat ex Phil. 3. 9. & cum iustitiā Christi ea sola sit, quæ perfecta & iustitiā divina respondeat, & legi adequatur, & quâ solum induti, fidenter possumus coram tribunali Dei comparere, ea utique erit justificationis nostræ causa, quæ tamen nostrā fieri aliter non potest, quàm per imputationem: fusiùs explicat hoc Scriptura duplici factâ comparatione, & analogiâ.*

1. Ex comparatione primi & secundi Adami, quam apertissimè insinuat Apostolus, Rom. 5. versib. 12, 18, 19. Sicut per unum hominem peccatum introiit in mundum, & per peccatum mors: & sicut per unam offensam reatus venit in omnes homines in condemnationem; itā per unius iustitiā beneficium redundat in omnes homines

Conclus. 3.

homines ad justificationem vitæ. Sicut enim per contumaciam unius hominis peccatores constituti sunt multi; ita per unius obedientiam iusti constituentur multi. *Ad cuius commatis explicationem hac monenda sunt:* 1<sup>o</sup>. Apostolum instituere comparationem inter primum & secundum Adamum, ut duo hominum capita, & personas publicas; hunc posterorum omnium, illum singulorum credentium. 2<sup>o</sup>. inter modum communicationis Adami inobedientiæ & Christi iustitiæ. At Adami peccatum nostrum fit per propagationem respondet Bellarminus: fatemur nativam corruptionem transire in nos per propagationem, at reatum primi actus peccaminosi nobis imputari. Causalis enim propagatio peccati non impedit imputationem, quatenus nos Deus respexit, ut in Adamo peccantes: pari ratione utramque iustitiam & inhaerentem, & imputatam habemus à Christo; at hanc absolutionis & justificationis causam asserimus, non illam. 3<sup>o</sup>. Utrique par ratio, & fundamentum communicationis: 1. Quod Adami peccatum imputetur posteris provenit à nostra cum eo, ut defectionis capite, unionem. 2. Ob fœdus cum Adamo, ejusque posteris initum. Ità fundamentum & ratio imputationis iustitiæ Christi duplex est: 1. Unio nostra cum Christo per fidem. 2. Fœdus inter Patrem et Christum sancitum de opere redemptionis peragendo, quo Christus se sistit ut sponsorem, et fidei-jussorem nostrum; unde fit, ut ejus iustitia à Deo, ut nostra, et nostro loco præstita habeatur, proindeque nobis imputetur.

2<sup>o</sup>. Ex analogiâ modi, quo Christus factus est peccatum pro nobis, et nos in eo iustitia. Hanc comparationem innuit Apostolus, 2 Cor. 5. 21. Fecit enim, ut qui peccatum non novit, pro nobis peccatum esset, ut nos efficeremur iustitia Dei in eo. Qui Christum peccatorem factum esse inhaerenter asserit, blasphemus erit, et satisfactionis meritum tollit: qui peccatum hoc in loco exponunt victimam et sacrificium pro peccato, non multum ab Apostoli scopo aberrare videntur. Interim affirmamus, ut fiat victima, necessum fore, ut nostra ei imputarentur peccata (unde cum defectoribus Christum annumeratum fuisse legimus, Isa. 53. 12.) prout omnia populi peccata hirco emissario imposita fuisse constat, Levitic. 16. 21, 22. Ut summatim igitur hoc contrahamus argumentum: Christus imputativè pro nobis factus est peccatum; ergo nos in eo imputativè iusti constituti sumus. Hanc conclusionem ponimus.

1<sup>o</sup>. Contra istud tamen credere Arminianorum, quorum vestigia (ut in aliis Theologia capitibus ita in hoc) premit Goodwinus in peculiari tractatu, quo fidei imputationem in sensu proprio probare conatur; ac si instar legalis et perfectæ iustitiæ à Deo estimaretur ipse credendi affectus: dum locum istum ad Roman. 4. 3. literaliter intelligunt; Credidit Abraham Deo, & imputatum est ei ad iustitiam. Quo in loco fidem materialiter intelligendum non esse, quasi merito et dignitati fidei debebatur



debeatur Abrahami iustificatio: sed relativè, quòd credenti iustitia fuit gratis imputata, ideòque ver. 11. δικαιωσιν τῆς πίστεως, hoc est fide apprehensa, vocatur, vel organicè, quòd Abraham fide acceperit iustitiam à Deo gratis donatam: hac abunde satis evincunt, ut fides sit propriè nostra coram Deo iustitia.

1. Repugnant istæ, quibus nostra laborat fides, imperfectiones.  
2. Repugnat officio & naturæ fidei, quæ extrinsecam & alienam applicat iustitiam: hinc per fidem dicimur Christum recipere, Ioan. 1. 12. eaque, quâ iustificamur, iustitia dicitur δικαιωσιν Θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως, Rom. 3. 22. & οὐ μίσους δικαιωσιν, Rom. 10. 6. Fides igitur non est res imputata, sed instrumentum applicativum, & receptivum istius iustitiæ, quâ iustificamur.

3. Iustitia fidei universaliter opponitur iustitiæ operum. Ei, qui non operatur, sed credit, imputatur fides in iustitiam, Rom. 4. 5. Ergò fides, quâ opus, non valet nec acceptatur ad iustificationem. Imò Apostolus Paulus suæ nuntium mittit iustitia, ut fidei iustitiam stabiliret, ad Philip. 3. 9. Ut comperiar, inquit, non habens meam iustitiam, sed eam quæ ex fide: at verò id credere est pars iustitiæ nostræ.

4. Quidni alia virtutes & gratiæ ad iustitiam imputarentur aequè ac fides, nisi ea relativè & ut Christi receptiva consideratur? cum pariter gratiæ repugnarent iustificationi, Rom. 11. 6.

5. Si fides, quâ opus, iustificaret, esset vel solitaria, vel conjunctim cum iustitia Christi. Si prius dicatur, frustranea redditur iustitia Christi: si posterius, imperfecta. Fidem igitur ad iustitiam imputari, intelligi debet, metonymicè, relativè, concretivè, seu connotativè cum objecto, quòd apprehendit: Christum videlicet, & eius iustitiam, quæ materia est nostræ iustificationis coram Deo.

Secundo, Contra istud Socinianorum dogma, quò statuunt Christi imitationem esse nostræ iustificationis causam. Ità Socinus, (cap. 6. par. 4. de Christo Servatore.) Iustificamur, inquit, per imitationem Christi, quâ nos, ità ut Christus, Deo obedimus: & fidem ipsam definit esse imperfectam legis observantiam. Ultra facemur, Summam religionis esse imitari, quem colimus: at interim hanc imitationem ab omni in iustificatione nostra causalitate removemus, (ornamentum agnoscimus conversationis, negamus esse instrumentum iustificationis, non enim per nostram obedientiam, sed διὰ τὴν ἑξουσίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, nos iustificari cum Apostolo prostemur, Rom. 5. 19.) cum hoc de imitatione Christi, ut causâ iustificationis nostræ, dogma & ἀγανον est, & ἄλλοθεν, quòd aliter mirum esset Apostolum tacito silentio præterisse, cum ex industria iustificationis doctrinam tractat. Smalcus (in Præfat. Catechism. Racov.) hoc in Sociniana religionis laudem iactat, quòd Ecclesia sua maxime præ aliis reformatæ sunt à Papatu: quòd non minus insulse, quàm superbe dictum esse, eorum de præviis dispositionibus,



bus, de viribus liberi arbitrii, de perfectione hominis in hac vita, de concupiscentia, & alia id genus dogmata, quibus cum Pontificiis conspiciant, abunde satis testantur. Sin minus, ex hac, quam prae manibus habemus, doctrinâ Socinianâ luculenter constat eos unâ cum Pontificiis convenire in articulo justificationis. Quid enim aliud sonat Socinianorum imitatio Christi, quàm Pontificiorum iustitia, quam venditant, inhærens, & operum? quam cum, in prima conclusione, satis exentilavimus, pergamus ad quartam & ultimam conclusionem, qua hæc est.

Conclus. 4.

Justificatio peccatoris coram Deo fit per imputationem totius iustitiæ Christi, vel, tota iustitia Christi imputatur credentibus ad justificationem. In quam conclusionem insurgunt è nostris etiam Theologis nonnulli, qui satisfactionem, & mortem Christi imputationem ultro fatentur: iustitiam tamen activam, nostro loco præstitam, & in iustitiam nobis imputatam, ex professo negant. Nos parem utriusque rationem, & necessitatem, tum Scripturæ testimoniis, tum rationum momentis brevissimè demonstrabimus. Passivæ obedientiæ imputationem propugnant istæ, quæ Christum se pro nobis dedisse affirmant: activæ imputationem, sive impletionem legis à Christo factam credentibus imputari, hæc luculenter satis testantur Scripturæ, ad Rom. 10. 4. ubi Christus dicitur finis legis in iustitiam omni credenti. Finis legis est eas iustificare, qui eam observant, quem finem quò minus assequamur, impedit non legis qualitas, sed carnis nostræ vitiositas, cui malo medetur Christi obedientia, per quam fide apprehensam hunc finem legis consequimur, ut coram Deo iustificaremur, ac si in propriis personis perfectissimè implevissemus. Apertissimè explicat hunc locum Chrysostomus, *ὅς ἐστι πένοντες αὐτῷ, ἵνα κενὴν ἡμῶν πόρνην πάλιν γὰρ πειρὰς διαπορεύωμεν ἐλάττω:* hæc est, Christi iustitiam imputatam, ad Rom. 8. 4. dicitur *διὰ τὴν ὁμιλίαν τοῦ νόμου:* hoc est, ius legis in nobis compleri: non dicitur à nobis, sed, *ἐν ἡμῶν, in nobis:* hæc est, ut Christo unitis, & eius perfectam obedientiam per fidem participantibus. *ἀντίνομος* hic designat totum illud, quod à nobis lex potuit exigere, vix. tum pœnæ perfolutionem, tum perfectam obedientiam, quam & lex primario, & jura indispensabili postulat, quam itidem in Scripturâ divinâ sapissime designat: ut Luc. 1. 6. Erant ambo iusti in conspectu Dei, incedentes in omnibus *τῶν ἐντολῶν τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν δικαιώσεων τοῦ κυρίου:* Ad Gal. 4. 4. Christus dicitur pro nobis *ὑποταχθεὶς τῷ νόμῳ,* factus sub lege, hoc est, tum pœnæ comminante, tum obedientiam strictam postulante. Minus ad hanc rem facit illud Apostoli ad Rom. 3. 18. *ὅτι ἐν δυνάμει τοῦ νόμου:* per cuius iustitiam beneficium dicitur redundans in justificationem, quò in loco obedientiam Christi designari constat: 1. ex oppositione ad Adami *παρὰ τὸν νόμον,* seu peccatum, quod proculdubio erat legis violatio. 2. Ex termi-

terminis æquipollentibus, ver. 19. διὰ τῆς παρανομίας τοῦ ἐνός, et διὰ τῆς ὑπονομίας τοῦ ἐνός: quæ voces justitiam activam & obedientiam designant. Unicum superaddam Scripturæ locum, Matth. 3. 15. ubi Christus Joannem alloquitur, πρέπον ἐστὶν ἡμῖν πληροῦν πάσαν δικαιοσύνην, decet nos implere omnem justitiam: qui locus solidissimè nostram firmabit sententiam, si Chrysostomo fides habenda est, qui hisce verbis explicat Christi mentem; quasi videlicet dixisset; ἐμοὶ τὸ δύναιτο πρέπον ἐστὶν ἀκούειν τὸ κατὰ λαλεῖν ὑπὲρ ἧς ἔχοντων. Liceat mihi frui patientiâ vestrâ & candore, dum argumentorum, quæ hanc evincunt veritatem, attingo capita. Obedientiam Christi passivam, seu satisfactionem postulabat.

1. Vindicatrix Dei justitia, cui ut satisfiat necessum fuit, priusquam peccator, salvâ Dei justitiâ & veritate, absolvi, & à commertis pœnis liberari possit.

2. Impotentia nostra, quâ satisfaciendo non eramus pro offensa infiniti demeriti,

3. Ut valeat nobis ad justificationem, requiritur, ut quodammodo fiat nostra, quod aliter, quàm per imputationem fieri non possit: hanc autem solum ad plenam nostram justificationem non sufficere, quin insuper desideretur imputatio justitiæ activæ, hac evidentissimè evincunt.

Primò, Sponsoris officium, quod Christum loco nostro subivisse testatur Apostolus ad Hebr. 7. 22. In fide-jussore autem duo desiderantur, 1. ut totum persolvat debitum, 2. ut persolvat loco debitoris, quem ob hanc solutionem, ac si ipse dedisset, creditor absolvit, & dimittit: ita Christus vas & sponsor pro nobis factus, totum, quo oberati, neque tamen solvendo eramus, persolvit debitum, quod duplex erat, 1º. Obedientiæ. 2º. Pænæ: hoc ex indispensabilis creationis lege, illud ex primo quod commissimus peccato; hoc legi, illud justitiæ divinæ debebamus: utrumque igitur persolvit Christus, & perfectam præstando obedientiam, & mortem, quam lex minabatur peccatoribus, subeundo utrumque loco nostro, ut per satisfactionem nos à maledictione, & damnatione liberaret, quam lex minabatur, & per perfectam obedientiam jus nobis ad salutem acquirat, quam Deus legem factoribus promissit. At Christi obedientiam pro se debitam objiciunt Adversarii, proinde nobis ut imputetur impossibile est. Per hypostaticam unionem Christum solutum fuisse ab obligatione legis existimant viri acutissimi Maccovius, & Perkinsius. Sed esto, debita licet sit, potest esse meritorea & nobis cedere in justitiam: 1º. quia voluntariè suscepta sit humana natura, proindeque hæc obedientia erat solum ex conditione & suppositione necessaria: 2º. ob personæ dignitatem: 3º. ex pacto & fœdere cum Patre inito: 4º. ex gratiola Patris acceptione: ut Rex filio infensus, placari potest meritis Filii, licet omnis ejus, ut subditi, observantia sit Regi debita: neque tamen hinc tollitur nostra obedi-



entia, ad quam nihilominus tenemur, tum ex indispensabili legis obligatione, tum ut debitum observantia & gratitudinis.

Secundò, Iustitia & sanctitas Dei: illa mortem, hæc obedientiam perfectam postulat; quarum primam cum ferre non possumus sine æterno salutis dispendio, nec alteram præstare ob naturæ vitium, & imbecillitatem, Deus credentes respiciat oportet, ut in Christo utramque persolvente, vel in æternum desperent de justificatione & salute.

Tertiò, Legis indispensabilitas et perpetua obligatio. Christus dicit se non venisse ut legem solveret, Matth. 5. 17. Imò Apostolus profitetur legem per fidem stabiliri, Rom. 3. 31. Lex obedientiam primariò postulat, secundariò & per accidens pœnam: ergo ex eo, quo Adversarii evincunt satisfactionis, & mortis Christi necessitatem ob legis comminationem, ut nos à morte liberemur, à fortiori colligimus necessitatem perfectæ Christi obedientia ob legis mandatum, ex cuius imputatione ad vitam acceptamur. Lex & pœnam, & obedientiam peccatoris postulat; Hoc fac, & vives; & In die, quo comederis, morieris. Lex enim non patitur pœnam, nec iustitiam vicariam; hoc Evangelii gratia debemus, quòd fide-jussoris Christi obedientia & satisfactio nobis imputatur ad justificationem: si Christum spectamus ex vi, & rigore legis; si nosmetipsos ex gratia, justificationem & salutem consequimur.

Quartò, Utriusque imputationem postulat salus nostra: passivæ, ut expiatur peccatum jam commissum; activæ, ut satisfiat legis mandato, & vita conditio impleatur: hujus, ut à morte liberemur, illius, ut vitæ & æternitate donemur: neque enim pœna abstractè & solitariè considerata valet ad vitæ meritum & impetrationem: quæ non perpeffioni pœnarum, sed perfectæ obedientia promittitur, Levit. 18. 5.

Quintò, Adversariorum sententia elevat honorem Christi, ejusq; iustitiæ minuit efficaciam. Si enim ut nobis praberet obedientia exemplū (quem secundarium obedientia Christi usum agnoscimus) Socinum sequuti, Christum & satisfecisse & implevisse legem asseramus; detrahimus & merito obedientia, & persona dignitati: quippe & viri pii, & Martyres nobis obedientia tramitem ostendunt, & sanctitatis exemplum præbent: neque solū requiritur ut preparatio passivæ, vel conditio personæ Mediatoris, ut victima fiat pro peccatis: ad hoc enim suffecisset originalis vel habitualis Christi iustitia, & frustraneum foret Christum vitam duxisse tam sanctam, tot undique miseriis stipatam & intertectam. Quid? quòd & Dei gratiam, & misericordiam, Christi honorem, Christianorum consolationem quàm maximè promovet hac de iustitia activæ Christi imputatione doctrina: quod fusiùs demonstrandum foret, si temporis, vel patientia vestra dudum lassata ratio pateretur. Si qui adsunt, qui hac de re secus sentiunt, facile mihi persuaserim, ab iis



me veniam impetraturum, quam, Adversariorum iniquissimus, Soci-  
nus hujus sententia patronis olim indulget (lib. 8. cap. 4. de Christo  
Servatore) cujus verba coronidis loco apponam. Non multum re-  
fert, inquit, siue Christi imputatione, siue quacunque aliâ ratione  
fieri justificatio dicetur, dummodo vitæ sanctimonia salva sit: &  
cap. 1. Condonabit istam opinionem (de imputatione loquitur)  
proculdubio benignissimus Deus, utpote ab hominis malitia non  
proficiscentem, si vitæ sanctimonia, quam à nobis omnino requirit,  
incolumis remaneat. At non est quare Hæreticorum pessimus formidet  
pietatis dispendium ex imputationis doctrina: nisi cum obsurdescerent  
Hæretici, ad ravum usque clamamus, inhærentem justitiam inseparabi-  
liter cum imputata conjunctam, & studium bonorum operum fru-  
ctum & effectum asserimus fidei, quâ hac justitia Christi applicatur:  
meritum bonorum operum repudiamus, usum & necessitatem prosi-  
temur; excludimus ex actu justificationis, non ab homine justificato:  
interim asserimus, Justitiam Christi solum valere, eamque totam desi-  
derari ad nostram justificationem, & concludimus,

Tota Christi justitia imputatur credentibus  
ad justificationem.

FINIS.





# The qualification of a Gospel-Minister :

in a Sermon on ,

ACTS 18.24.

*And a certain Jew, named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.*



Nothing more conduceth to the souls comfort, and establishment of any Church, then the constant presence of a learned, and the pious example of a religious pastor : as nothing betrays people sooner to ignorance, irreligion, and apostacie, then a want or absence of a judicious and religious minister. *Moses* cannot stir from the *Israelites* to the mount, though upon necessary occasion of converse with God, but presently they fall into Idolatry, worshipping the calf : and it is no great wonder if wolves should make a prey of the flock, when they have no shepherd. Let itinerarie *non-residents* think of this : *S. Paul* was deeply sensible of it ; and therefore the care of all churches being upon him, which he mentions as an additionall trouble to all his other : when ever the work of the Gospel called him from any church, he was carefull to leave, or send another to them, as *Titus* to *Crete*, and *Timothy* to the *Thessalonians*, to establish and confirm them in the faith : and here, when he was necessitated to leave *Ephesus* to go to *Jerusalem* at the *Passover* (conceiving that the fittest opportunitie to spread and propagate the Gospel there, rather then any other time of the year) he is carefull to substitute *Apollos*, (in which *Calvin* piously admires the providence of God over his church, not to suffer it without a settled minister) who might recompence the loss of *Paul*, and water that church which he had there planted. *Apollos* I say, one fully furnished for the work of the Gospel, and most fit for *Ephesus* (ministeriall gifts then proving most usefull, when right placed ; the want of which hath rendred many great *Pauls*, and men of eminent abilities unprofitable, useles, and unsuccesfull) famous then for Orators, and Philosophers, *Ut artem arte eluderet*, that *as Julian* the *Apostate* cried out when convinced, and *non-plus* d by the reasons of the *Christians*, *mis duxeris Regis Anthonia*, that they were catcht in their own net, and beaten at their own weapons ; so *Apollos* here might by his heavenly and ravishing eloquence,

Exod. 32.1.

2 Cor. 11.23

Titus 1.5.

1 Thel. 3.2.

Calvin, in locum.

Cor. in locum

Theodoret. lib. 3. cap. 8.

quence catch them in the net of the Gospel, who so much boasted of their fleshly and carnall wisdom.

Two things are considerable in the words.

In locum.  
Rom. 16. 10.

1. The person, *Apollos*: the same, if you believe *Grotius*, with that *Apelles* *S. Paul* salutes and commends.

2. The qualification: that's twofold,

1. Ἄνθρωπος λόγιος, *An eloquent man.*

2. Δυνατός ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς, *Mighty in the scriptures.*

1. The person, *Apollos*: of whom I intended to have spoken little, or nothing, but that I observe the *Church-Levellers* of our time, who would remove the ancient land-marks, pull up the hedges, and lay the ministerial office open, and in common to all, whose confidence, covetousness, or ambition makes them pretend to Gifts; or whom the less judicious multitude out of faction, or separation, or envy to the settled ministry, or affectation of novelty, or weakness and rashness shall judge *gifted*, though not *called* or *ordained*: they make this instance of *Apollos*, as one of their *asylums* to flee to, whom they alleadge as a *gifted* brother, no *ordained* preacher. Give me leave therefore to suggest briefly some few hints to you, which may lead us into a more full discovery of the person, and may drive these pretenders from that refuge, which they have betaken themselves to in this instance of *Apollos*.

Hist. Euseb.  
lib. 2. cap. 16.

1. It is probable that *Apollos* (being an *Alexandrian*) was educated in the school of *S. Mark*, who first planted the Christian faith here, as *Eusebius* shews; or, as others conjecture, among the *Essens*, who had a famous school at *Alexandria*, and, if you believe *Baronius*, were convert Jews turned Christians; which he thinks probable, both because those historians which speak of the Jews, as *Josephus*, *Strabo*, and the rest, are wholly silent concerning this sect; and chiefly because all the sects of the Jews, as *Pharisees*, *Sadduces*, *Herodians*, the scripture speaks of as enemies to Christ, but we read of no opposition Christ met with from the *Essens*, nor doth Christ ever charge or denounce woes against them, as against the rest: though I know others impute this to the fewness of that sect in *Jerusalem*, whilest our Saviour lived, or else to the peaceable quietness, and calm of their spirit, not being given to contradiction, (as the *Sadduces* and *Pharisees* were, men of more hot and fiery spirits) it being part of their religion, as it is of too many of our times, to suffer every man in his; certain it is and confessed of all, that they were very diligent, and industrious in searching the scriptures of the *old Testament*, especially the Prophets, and so might learn much of Christ; and here, it is likely, *Apollos* might get his large scripture knowledge, which he so powerfully managed



ged to the conviction of the Jews concerning Christ; for verse 28. it is said, that *He mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures, that Jesus was Christ.*

2. Observe the place, where *Apollos* preached; it was not a Christian constituted Church, but a Jewish Synagogue, verse 26. *He began to speak boldly in the Synagogue.* It was a generall, though corrupt, custome amongst the Jews to indulge libertie to learned men, though no priests, to teach in their Synagogues; as the Scribes and the Lawyers, which the Gospel every where speaks of: upon which custome it was that *S. Paul*, though of the tribe of *Benjamin*, was so oft permitted to preach in their Synagogues; as we read throughout this book of the *Acts*: hence the teaching of the Scribes is opposed to that authority wherewith Christ preached. *Mat. 7. 29.* it is said, Christ taught the people *as one having authority, and not as the Scribes, who had none*: So we finde *Apollos* here preaching in the Synagogue, *non ut habens auctoritatem, sed scientiam*, saith the learned *Estius*, as making use of, and taking advantage of that indulgence of the Jews to preach and spread the doctrine of Christ.

3. Observe the time when he preached; it was when God for the more speedy and effectually propagating of the Gospel poured out plentifully of the extraordinary Gifts of his Spirit; and it would be rashness in any one to assert, that *Apollos* was not extraordinarily Gifted: and if so, this instance will nothing at all advantage those pretenders who want ordinary Gifts.

4. Consider that this *Apollos* was one of *Johns* disciples, ver. 25. it is said, *He knew only the baptisme of John*, that is to say, the doctrine of *John* concerning Christ to come; and it may probably be thought the contrary cannot be proved, that he was authorized and commissioned by *John* to preach the Gospel.

5. Observe what this *Apollos* was afterwards; an eminent, publick, and authorized preacher in the Church of *Corinth*; *S. Pauls* helper and successor *1 Cor. 3. 6.* *I have planted (saith Paul) and Apollo watered*, and therefore *S. Paul* calls him *his brother*, *1 Cor. 16. 12.* and he is, *totidem verbis*, in expresse terms called, a minister, *1 Cor. 3. 5.* *Who is Paul? or who is Apollos? but ministers by whom ye believed*; and so famous he was, that he hath the churches approbation of his Gifts, verse 27. and when he came to *Corinth*, he was so eminent, that he proved the head of a sect and faction (which is the highest ambition of their pretenders) *1 Cor. 1. 12.* *One saith I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ*; and though this was after his preaching here at *Ephesus*, yet *I* (reading of no ordination he received afterwards) have

E

good

*Paul*

*in locum, &  
Mar. 4. v. ult.*

*Four itans.*

ordained.

Scripture  
Authority.2 Tim. 3. 15,  
17.

Heb. 5. 4.

1 Tim. 5. 22.

Acts 13. 12.

Rom. 1. 1.

good reason to believe that he was now ordained.

6. Negative testimonies from Scripture in things circumstantial are but illogically, and inartificial arguments. God indeed hath in things fundamental to faith and holiness made a plentiful provision in Scripture, which is able to *make a man wise to salvation, and perfect to every good work*. To assume any thing as a rule of life; or foundation of faith, more than that the Scripture affords, is to impose upon our selves, and defame the Scriptures; but silence of Scripture in things circumstantial, especially in particular instances, is not rationally argumentative. *Argumentum ab autoritate negante, sed non ab autoritate negativa, valet in Theologicis*, saith a reverend man of our own: if Scripture had said plainly, that *Apollos* was not ordained, the instance had been of some force, but to argue, he was not ordained because the Scripture doth not say, *totidem verbis*, he was so, is to me a very irrational and unsatisfactory argument. Nay, if we consider the peremptory strictness of Scripture-commands, none should take this office upon him, but he that is called as was *Aaron*, and that was done by the outward appointment of *Moses*; and withall considering the Apostles care to leave *Titus* to ordain in every citie, and his strict charge to *Timothy*, to *lay hands suddenly on no man*, to wit, without examination of his Gifts and abilities, and all this to prevent disorderly, promiscuous, daring intrusion into the ministeriall office; considering withall the solemn separating of *Barnabas* and *Paul* by prayer and laying on of hands, which calling and appointment *S. Paul* frequently asserts to uphold his authority amongst them to whom he wrote, as to the *Romans* he tels them he was ἀφαιρημένον ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, *separated unto the Gospel of Christ*; laying these things and many more which might be alleadged together, we, I think, finding *Apollos* here preaching (which may equally satisfie other instances brought out of Scripture,) have good ground to believe he was ordained, though the Scripture be silent in it, when it doth not assert the contrary.

7. If all this will not satisfie the objectors, let me adde this last by way of concession; let those, who lay this instance as a foundation for a *Babel* of confusion in the church (for there can be no order in a rude and promiscuous parity) I say, let those pretenders demonstrate themselves to be *Apollo's*, men eloquent, and mighty in the Scriptures, and for my part (though I think those most fit to sit in *Pauls* chair, who have been educated, and instructed at the feet of *Gamaliel*) I profess, I see no great reason, or evidence of Scripture, why they may not be admitted to the ministeriall office. But when either out of weakness they dare not, or out of pride



pride and faction they will not submit themselves to the judgement and appointment of those whom scripture, precept, Apostolical practise, and uninterrupted custom of the church hath impowred to set apart and authorise men for this office, and so enter in at the right door, but will audaciously climb up some other way (excuse the expression from uncharitableness, 'tis our Saviours concerning the *Pharisees*, who were like intruders in these daies) they are but thieves and robbers, stealing away the hearts and affection of the people, yea, and the maintenance too from the right and duly-constituted ministrie.

These considerations of the person I humbly and willingly submit to your judgements, and shall come now to those qualifications, which were the intended subject of my discourse, when I first laid out my thoughts upon these words.

First, *Novus*, which may have a four-fold reference,

1. To his skill in Historie and Antiquitie; thus *Lorinus* understands the word: a fit qualification for an *Apollos*, a minister of the Gospel, to be versed especially in *Ecclesiastical* and *Church-history*, where he may observe the various, and severall providences of God protecting his church, the originall and growth of errors, arguments for the truth, and acquaint himself with those supports and comforts which Christians have had in suffering for it, all which are very usefull for an *Apollos*.

2. To his knowledge in scripture, as if herein his eloquence consisted, not in a vain pomp, and proud ostentation of words, but in a powerfull and quaint discoverie of that majesticall elegancie and heavenly eloquence which is in scripture: no greater eloquence any where then in scripture; he that will *επισυναν* (which is a *Metaphor*, you know, taken from diggers in mines) search and dive into them, shall finde rich and precious mines of eloquence, golden *Allegories*, height of *Metaphors*, and all other tropes and figures of *Rhetorick* more fully and elegantly exemplified, then in any the most eloquent poet, or exactest orator, which the learned *Glasius* in his *Philologia sacra* hath admirably discovered.

True indeed, a curfrie and non-observant negligent reader cannot discover it; as a man, who onely looks upon, but never digges into a mine, will never finde the treasure. *S. Austin* confesseth that, whiles he was a *Manichee*, he had low and mean thoughts of scripture, *visa est mihi indigna, quam Tullianæ dignitati compararem*, saith he: he thought it not comparable to *Tullies* eloquence; but when he search't farther into them, then he discovered that elegancie, which became the majestic of Scripture-mysteries, and men acted by the Spirit of God, as

Lib. 3. Confess.  
cap. 5.

- Lib. 4. c. 6. | you may see at large in that excellent piece of his *De doctrina Christiana*.
- Exod. 4. 10. | 3. To the freedom and fluencie of his language, by which with a pleasing violence he captivated the ears and hearts of his auditors: this is a great gift of God, and a very requisite qualification of an *Apollos*; the want of which made *Moses* decline the office, *O my Lord*, saith he, *I am not eloquent, I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue*; and could not be satisfied till God gave him the promise of more then ordinat assistance, *v. 12. I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say*. This is that *ἀνοίγει τὴν στόμα*, the opening of the door of utterance, which *S. Paul* exhorts the *Colossians* to pray for to God for him. A free and full abilitie of expressing the conceptions of the minde (according to the capacitie of the Auditors) is an excellent and desirable ministeriall gift, without which the greatest parts oft prove unedifying and unprofitable.
- Coloff. 4. 3. | 4. To his exquisite skill in all arts and sciences; and this the Greek word *σοφία* signifies, as *Camerarius* notes, and this too is a requisite qualification for an *Apollos*, a minister of the Gospel. This was the eminencie of *Moses*, that he was learned in all the wisdom of the *Egyptians*, that is to say, the liberall arts and sciences, which *Austin* compares to the *Egyptian* spoils transferred to the use and service of the *Israelites*. This was the commendation of *Daniel*, that he was cunning in all knowledge and understanding, and skilfull in all wisdom and learning. *S. Paul* was born at *Tarsus*, the Metropolis of *Cilicia*, more famous then *Athens* (if we credit *Strabo*) for the studie of Philosophy and the Greek tongue, and afterwards instructed by *Gamaliel* at Jerusalem; so *Apollos* here is *ἀνὴρ λόγιος*. The greater wonder and pittie both, that such knowledge, which was the real honour of those, should now be our discredit and reproach: we being fallen into those times of which *Esperæus* complained, when *Græcè nōsse suspectum erat*, Hebraicè *propè Hereticum*, or, if you will speak in the more uncharitable language of our times, Antichristian; when 'tis the cric of too many, what *Festus* cried out against *Paul*, that too much learning instead of qualifying, and enabling any to be *Apollos*, ministers of the Gospel, does but make us mad: I wish the want of it did not make them more such. But I shall not now undertake the vindication of learning, from those uncharitable imputations, which hath lately been done by an ingenuous man amongst our selves, but shall enter upon the second qualification of *Apollos*, which I chiefly intended, *σοφία ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς*, mighty in the Scriptures; which I shall speak of; First, *Doctrinally*, in two particulars,



1. I shall shew the excellencie of Scripture-knowledge in  
it self.

2. The usefulness of it as to *Apollonius*, a Minister of the  
Gospel.

Secondly, *Practically* in a few words of Application.

First the excellencie of Scripture-knowledge in it self appears in  
these considerations,

1. The excellencie of things revealed in scripture, so sublime  
and spirituall, that the light of nature, and the highest improve-  
ment of reason, could never have discovered without divine reve-  
lation, as the secrets of Gods electing love, reconciliation by Christ,  
justification by faith, adoption, the covenant of grace: these are se-  
crets which the eye of reason could never pierce into, these were  
mysteries hidden from ages and generations, but now manifested  
by the Gospel. To these adde the glorious mysterie of the blessed  
Trinity, which is wholly indemonstrable by naturall reason; in-  
deed, first supposing scripture-revelation, there may possibly be  
some resemblances of it found in the creation, as the *esse, posse, and*  
*operari* of every creature, or those three common notions of Being,  
*Oneness, Truth, Goodness*, and many more which the schooles insist  
on, and there may be some argument to evince my faith not to be  
against reason (though I have the greatest reason in the world to  
believe it, because God saies it) as that God should infinitely com-  
municate himself, or from the perfection of the number three, and the  
great account the Heathens had of it; which arguments *Eftius* vi-  
ges, who yet confesseth this mysterie, abstracted from divine reve-  
lation, wholly indemonstrable by any light of reason: this mysterie  
scripture discovers, *There are three, who have record in heaven, the*  
*Father, the Son, and the Spirit; and these three are one.* To instance  
but in one, which indeed is the summe and substance of all divine  
revelation, the mysterie of Christ, which is above the reach, and be-  
yond the discerning of most prying and improved reason: I easily  
believe the Heathens (the wisest of them at least) might have  
some knowledge of the fall of man, from the rebellion of passion a-  
gainst reason, from the strange proneness which they experienced to  
vices, *quæ sine exemplo discuntur*, saith *Seneca*, not inclined to them  
by any acquired habit, nor led by any bad examples, nay, even to  
those vices which carrie a contradiction in them to naturall light;  
adde to them the difficulty of acquiring habits, and exercising the  
acts of virtue (which would be easie if naturall): these were evi-  
dent signes and effects of some sin, which prepossessed and inhabi-  
ted our nature, to which purpose that of *Austin* is excellent, *con-*  
*scientia tam concupiscentia testis est, quam hostis, Continencia* is both the  
enemy,

John 5.7.

Lib. 3. quæst.  
cap. 30.

*Sine exemplo*

*Virtus, non s. e.*

*Austin op.*

enemy, and evidence of concupiscence: for virtue could not be heard, if it were not opposed by the strength of naturall inclinations to sin. These, I say, and many other sad effects of mans Apostacie, which might be named, are evidences to reason, that man is not now as he came out of the hands of God, but somewhat degenerate from his originall rectitude; but Gods dealing with man in a Covenant-way, and by his infinite wisdom ordering and disposing mans fall and Apostacie, to the accomplishing so great a mystrie as the sending of Christ into the world, to restore and recover man into a state in some respects better then that of innocencie, is a depth naturall reason could never fathom. God inhabiting humane nature, the word made flesh, and so undertaking for the recoverie of lost man, Christ in his three-fold office, as Prophet, Priest, and King, to dispel the darkness, expiate the guilt, and conquer the rebellion of corrupted nature, healing by Christs stripes, life by his death, are paradoxes to reason.

*Per mortem alterius stultum est sperare salutem.*

The candle of the Lord, as the soul of man is called, may discover something (though but darkly) of God, but Scripture onely is the star to lead us unto Christ. It was a just censure, which *Augustin* passeth upon *Tullies* works, that he could not finde the name of Christ in them. The Scriptures are the swadling-clothes in which Christ was wrapped. Our reason is of too low a stature, and therefore as *Zacheus* did upon the Sycamore; we must climbe the tree of life, the Scripture; if we would get a sight of Jesus.

Naturall reason may discover the back-parts of God in the creature, but if she pretends or presumes to discover the Sun of righteousness, she betraies her weakness and degeneracie; it is one end of Scripture-revelation, to supply the shortness and defect of naturall reason. Nay, the glorious Angels, the most quick-sighted of the whole creation, could not have discovered these Gospel-mysteries, *Which things*, saith the Apostle, *the Angels desire to look into*; *ταχύνειν*, to stoop, to peep, to prie into, as things veiled and hidden, alluding to the Cherubims, which were made with their eyes looking down towards the mercie-seat; the word signifies a diligent, solicitous, and through search: *Tanta Evangelii, & mysterii salutis majestas est atque jucunditas*, saith *Glasius*, either ravished with the pleasantness, or confounded and blinded with the Majestie of these mysteries. They desire to prie into them, and so they might have done, and been never the wiser, had not God revealed them by Scripture. What the Apostle speaks of that one mystrie of incorporating Jew and Gentile into one bodie by Christ, we may

say

1 Pet. 1. 12.

Ephes. 3. 10.

x Jew & Gentile.

Covenants

Christ opposed  
to Reason.

Tullies censure

Angels



say of these Gospel-mysteries, that God revealed to the intent, that unto principalities, and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God; without which revelation, the Angels had been strangers to these mysteries to this very day.

2. The excellencie of the revelation it self, or manner of revealing them, which appears upon a three-fold account.

1. The fulness and sufficiencie of it, both as to doctrine and practice, faith and maners, both to make a man of God *wise unto salvation, and perfect to every good work.*

1. Scripture contains a full revelation of all foundations of faith, or things necessarie to be believed to salvation, either expressly, or by convincing, evident, and undeniable consequence, and needs not to be eeked out with unwritten traditions, or pretended enthusiasmes and revelations. Tradition, which brings down and conveys Scripture-truths through the successive ages of the Church to us, we cannot without ingratitude but acknowledge as an eminent instance, and testimonie of Gods providence, and none of the least arguments for the authoritie, and Divinitie of Scripture; and in this sence the Church is *as the pillar holds forth the Kings proclamation, but contributes no authoritie to it.* And in this sence too, *St. Augustin's non credidisse Scripturam nisi Ecclesia autoritas commendaret,* may go for good and current Divinitie: we could not have believed the Scripture, because we could not have had it, if providence had not handed it to us by the Church. So revelation of Scripture-mysteries by the Spirit of God we acknowledge as the accomplishment of a great Gospel-promise of the Spirit *leading us into all truth:* which therefore the Apostle *Paul* praies for for the *Ephesians*, that God would give unto them *πνεῦμα ἀποκαλύψεως, the Spirit of revelation, the knowledge of Christ:* but traditions or revelations, as additionall or supplementall to Scripture, we reject as detracting from the wisdom of God, and the perfection of revealed truth. *Non est scriptum, timeas ut illud adjicientibus,* to wit, that wo, if any shall adde unto these words, God shall adde unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and the Apostle passeth an *Anathema* upon whoever should (though an Angel from heaven) *preach any other Gospel then he had preached.* *Notanter dicit præter non contra;* not onely what is against, but what is more then Scripture-revelation is to be rejected; there is enough revealed to bring us unto salvation, and what would you have more? *These things are written, saith St. John, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name;* and search the Scriptures, for in them ye

think

2 Tim. 3. 15, 17.

Joh. 16. 13.

Ephes. 1. 17.

Tertul.  
Revel. 22. 18

Gal. 1. 6.

Joh. 20. 31.

Joh. 5. 39.

Scripture

Providence.

Austin's true Church

think to have eternall life : and our Saviour doth not blame them for thinking so. And if Scripture be not sufficient, we may say as the disciples in another case, *ad quid perditio hac*, to what purpose was it written? *To the law and to the testimonie*, saith *Isaiah*. When the rich glutton in hell desired one should be sent from the dead to his brethren; *Abraham* sends them to *Moses* and the Prophets, *let them hear them*; let them but believe what is in *Moses* and the Prophets, and they need not fear coming into this place of torment.

2. Scripture is a full and perfect rule of holiness, able to make the man of God thoroughly furnished to every good work. Therefore our Saviour, when the Lawyer came and tempted him with that question, *What shall I do to inherit eternall life?* bids him have recourse to the Scriptures, *What is written in the law? how readest thou?* This is the onely perfect, and unerring rule of true righteousness. Those three words of the Apostle, *οὐκ ἔστιν, δικαιοσύνη, ἐν νόμῳ*, speak the whole dutie of a Christian in all his capacities, and relations to God, himself, and his neighbour: and this the Gospel teacheth and engageth us to do. So perfect a rule it is, that the most specious observances, the most glorious performances, the most exact worship is no way acceptable unto God, if not commanded in, and directed by the Word. They may have *λόγον συνείας* *ἐν τῷ θεῷ*, they may have a shew of wisdom in *Will-worship*, to the pleasing of men, not to the honour of God. God gave *Moses* a pattern for the making of the Tabernacle, and *David* for the Temple, and all things were to be ordered and regulated according to this pattern. God hath set us a perfect rule of worship in his word, and no service pleaseth him but what is according to this rule: as our Saviour told the woman of *Samaria*, concerning the *Samaritan* worship, at mount *Garazim*, and *Jewish* worship at *Jerusalem*, that the *Samaritanes* worshipped they knew not what, the *Jews* knew what they worshipped, for salvation was of the *Jews*; Why so? because the *Jews* had Gods speciall direction, and appointment of Gods word for their service, which the *Samaritanes* had not.

We acknowledge the Churches power to determine decent observances, and constitutions for publick order in the service of God. The Apostles *ἐκείνη ἐξουσία* will sufficiently warrant this. The Church is a cypher, stands for nothing, if it hath not power here, and he, who wilfully sleights these, will be found guiltie of contempt and disorder: but the imposition of traditional observances in so needless a number, as may seem to reduce us under the *Jewish* yoke, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear,

or



or as equally obligatorie to conscience as divine commands; or as the immediate worship of God; or as duties essentially necessarie in order to salvation, we justly abhor as the Tyrannie of *Rome*, as the infringement of Christian libertie, as a violation and voiding the commandment of God, as our Saviour told the Pharisees, that they made the commandment of God of none effect; that is, sleighted & disregarded by their traditions. All our holiness, all our worship must be regulated by Gods will, not our own: *Non ex arbitrio Deo servendum, sed ex imperio*; not according to our own fancie; but Gods command and prescription. It may seem somewhat a strange expression at first, *Israel hath forgotten his maker, and builded Temples*; one would rather think this was a reverencing of God: this is the account of it, God had appointed one Temple, and they multiply and build many, contrarie to Gods direction and institution. I say of all humane invented will-worship of God, as *Tertullian* of the Heathen-worship, *Ex religione superstitio compingitur, & eo irreligiosior quanto Ethnicus paratior*. Men in this are no better then laboriously superstitious, taking pains to be irreligious. And the judicious *Hooker* determines, that in Gods service to do that which we are not, is a greater fault, then not to do that which we are commanded. Amongst other reasons he gives this to our purpose, in that we seem to charge the law of God with hardness onely; in that with foolishness and insufficiencie, which God gave us as a perfect rule of his worship and service. I shall conclude this point with that of *S. Paul*, *As many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be on them, and mercie, and upon the Israel of God.*

Mat. 15. 6.

Hosea 8. 14.

Gal. 6. 16.

## 2. The perspicuitie and plainness of this revelation.

It is the design and plot of *Rome* to fasten an imputation of obscuritie upon the written Word, that hereby she may with more plausible shew exalt *Peters* pretended successour into the infallible chair, as an unerring interpreter, and also discourage and dishearten the people from reading them. As the spies reported the land of *Canaan* to be impregnable, and so disheartned the *Israelites*. Hence the Papists crie out of Scripture, that it is unintelligible, and obscure to vulgar and common capacities, and thus they defame, and raise a false report of the written Word, and make the difficultie of it a pretence for their neglect, and cloak for their ignorance.

The Scripture was made to be a Christians guide, and rule of life (as I said before): a blinde guide, a dark and obscure rule is a contradiction. *Thy word is a light to my feet, and a lanthorn to my paths*, saith *David*; and the Apostle *Peter* bids us look to the Scripture, as a light which shineth in a dark place: the same Apostle indeed observed in *S. Pauls* Epistles, *Some things hard to*

Pl. 119. 105.

1 Pet. 1. 19.

2 Pet. 3. 16.

be understood; this relates to the sublimity and mysteriousness of things revealed, not to the obscurity of the revelation.

There is a depth of myserie in Scripture, cloathed with a plain and familiar expression, *Thy testimonies are wonderfull*, saith David. There is the myserie of Scripture yet follows, *The entrance of thy words giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple*. Here are mysteries to exercise the acutest wits, depths for the profoundest judgements to fathom, and yet so plain and obvious, that the meanest and plainest, using the means, as prayer, diligent search, and the rest, may profit by. Here is meat for strong and grown Christians, and here is milk for babes too. In a word, God hath so intermingled, and interwoven Scripture-Revelations with some difficulties, some facilities, that plainness breeds not contempt, nor difficultie neglect and dishearnings; that by the plainness of them he might teach us knowledge, and by the difficulties learn us humilitie.

3. The certaintie and infallibilitie of Scripture-Revelation, as being written by the guidance and dictate of an infallible Spirit. *All Scripture is given by divine inspiration: no Scripture is of man's* *owne, of private interpretation*, for our translation, or *of any private spirit*, which reading I finde pleaseth Beza best, as agreeing with what is said in the next verse, that the pen-men of Scripture were, *and men as they were moved by the holy Ghost*: and therefore Scripture is a certain and infallible rule of faith and holiness.

This was one end of Scripture, That we might have an infallible rule of life, and judge of saving truth; which, had it been brought unto us onely by the aery conveyance of Tradition, uncertain revelation, might soon have been either forgotten, or corrupted. If we leave the Scripture once, we are left at miserable uncertainties, and lie open to all deceits and delusions. If we rest upon Enthusiasticall revelations, Satan can transform himself into an *angel of light*, and delude us: our faith and obedience will be alwaies at uncertainties. The revelations of those who pretend to them be alwaies various, sometimes contrarie, and commonly pretended to, to serve new interests and designs. The Spirit is every mans pretence, and therefore we must have some way to examine, and judge of the truth or falleness and error of every mans spirit: and this can be no other way, but by the infallible Canon of the Scripture. We never finde *S. Paul* alleading any of those *revelations*, those revelations which he had when he was *caught up into the third heaven*, but he hath recourse to the Scripture for the

Psal. 119.

119.

Ibid. v. 130.

2 Tim. 3. 16.

2 Pet. 1. 20.

Ibid. vers. 21.

1 Cor. 11. 13

2 Cor. 12. 4.



the vindication of the Doctrine he delivered; as you may see in his Apologie before Agrippa; *I continue*, saith he; *to this day saying no other things, then what Moses and the Prophets did say should come.* And the Apostle Peter speaking of the voice from heaven (though that was a true one, yet) adds; we have *βεβαιότερον ἢ ἑρπονιδὸς λόγος*, a surer word of prophesie; (to wit, the Scriptures; the same with *προφητεία* 2<sup>a</sup> 20.) *whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.* A voice from heaven may sooner deceive us, then the written Word of God: if we rest upon Traditions; these are oft erroneous (as *Rome* can witness) at best fallible and uncertain.

Acts 26. 22.

2 Pet. 1. 18, 19.

A man can scarce ever know when he hath believed and practised rightly, or enough: Traditions being variable, and oft in divers successions, one contrarie to another, in the guidances, and direction of our Pastors and Teachers. Nor can we certainly, or safely resolve our belief into them, for we are bid to trie these Spirits, *whether they be of God.* They may either out of ignorance, or malice mislead you: *Scripture Canon* is the onely infallible guide, and God may as soon deceive you, as Scripture can.

1 John 4. 1.

3. The excellent ends and fruits of this revelation and the knowledge of it: that is, not onely for discourse (though I could heartily wish it were made more use of this way): not onely to exercise a subtile wit (though there be Scripture-mysteries will do this too): not onely to ripen a lascivient fancie; which are the greatest ends of all other knowledge; but the ends of Scripture-knowledge are more heavenly and spiritual. The Apostle hath enumerated them to our hands, *it is profitable* *πρὸς διδασκαλίαν* for doctrine, if thou beest ignorant; *πρὸς ἐλεγχοῦ* for reproof, if thou beest erring and misled; *πρὸς ἐπισκευὴν* for correction, if thou beest sinning; *πρὸς παιδείαν* for instruction in righteousness, to lead thee to, and direct thee in thy dutie.

2 Tim. 3. 16.

Consider the excellencie of it in these respects above all other knowledge.

1. It is a confirming knowledge; the foundation and principle of constancie and settledness in Religion. The chief cause of the light Scepticisme, and wavering unsettledness of our times, is the want of a sound Scripture-knowledge of the Truth, with which if mens spirits were well ballasted; they would not so soon be tossed about, and carried away with every wind of doctrine. The Apostle, speaking of such, gives this account of it: that *they were children in understanding.* Observe who they are the Apostle speaks of, who are led captive by those seducers, who creep into houses: they are *fillic women.* And why they? the reason is given, *because they*

Ephes. 4. 14.

verse 7.

are ever learning, and can never come to the knowledge of the truth. No man can simply desire to be deceived. Error, as error, hath no suitability, or adequation to mans understanding; but many are deluded by error under the vizard of truth; *Jacob* was deceived with blear-eyed *Leah* instead of fair *Rachel*.

While men are in the dark, not enlightened by a clear Scripture-knowledge, they oft court error for truth. This never more easie then in these daies; when that, which will most secure us from Apostatizing from acknowledged and received truth, is a sound Scripture-knowledge: which therefore the Apostle prays God for the *Colossians* and others, that they might have the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mysterie of Christ, and he gives the reason, *This speak I lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.*

2. It is a comforting, supporting knowledge. So *David* found it, *Psal.* 19. 8. *The statutes of the Lord are pure, rejoicing the heart; and verse 10, sweeter they are then the honey, and the honey-comb.* The *Wise-man* (and he spake it experimentally; as having more wisdom then all that were before him in *Jerusalem*) found the upshot of all his knowledge to be nothing but vexation of spirit, *Eccles.* 1. 16. passing this deliberate judgement and sentence upon it, *verse 18. that in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.* But the comfort of Christians was one end of Scripture, which was written, *That we through patience, and comfort of the Scripture, might have hope.* Here an observant Reader may discover many glorious promises, which are rich treasures of comfort, full breasts of consolation, from which the pious Christian may suck much supporting and chearing sweetness. Here we may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of consolation, as the Prophet expresseth it, *Isaiah* 66. 11. The promise is as full of comfort as a duggie is full of milk; as crying children are quietted with the duggie, so perplexed consciences are quietted and eased by the promises; this all other knowledge in the world cannot help you too. What refuges hath *Seneca*, the wisest of *Stoicks*, found for doubting and troubled mindes? and yet all ended in mere disquietness. Not *Athens* must teach this lesson, but *Jerusalem*; not Reason, but Revelation; not Nature, but Scripture. I have read of a woman, who was much disquieted in conscience, even to despair, and endeavouring to prove her own executioner, was comforted by that promise, *Isaiah* 57. 25. *Thus saith the high and the lofty one which inhabiteth eternitie, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place: with him also that is of an humble and contrite spirit, to revive the hearts of the contrite ones:*

and

Coloss. 2. 2.

Verse 4.

Rom. 15. 4.



and of another who being readie to die, *Lord, saith he, I challenge thy promise, by which thou art engaged to give rest to those who are weary, and heavy laden;* and so was comforted.

3. It is a Transforming knowledge, which no other knowledge is. We read, *Rom. I. 21.* of the Heathen, who, *when they knew God, glorified him not as God:* and the Psalmist, having spoken of the knowledge of God in his creatures, subjoyns this as the perfection of the word of God, *Psal. 19. 7.* that it converteth the soul, *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.* In a word, natural knowledge is onely sufficient to make men without excuse, but Scripture-knowledge to make us wise unto salvation.

2 Tim. 3. 15.

Secondly, The usefulness and necessitie of it, as to an *Apollos*, is still in Scripture justly accounted the cognizance; and commendation of an able Minister. It was *Ezras* commendation that he was a readie Scribe in the Law of Moses: and *Timothies*, that from a child he had known the holy Scriptures, which *Paul* notes as the badge of a good Minister: *Thou (saith he to Timothy) shalt be a good Minister, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine.*

2 Tim. 3. 15.

1 Tim. 4. 6.

This knowledge is necessarie,

1. That he may truly and savingly make known, and discover *Jesus Christ*. This is the great dutie of Ministers; which was the end for which *S. Paul* desired the door of utterance, *Colos. 4. 3.* *αλαλτσα το μυστηριον του Χριστου*, to speak the mystrie of Christ: and therefore he desired to know nothing, among the *Corinthians*, but *Jesus Christ and him crucified*.

1 Cor. 2. 2.

Christ, he is the summe of Law and Gospel; the substance, and as it were Epitome of the written Word. Every thing in Scripture relates some way or other to Christ; the Types shadowed him, the Prophets foretold him, the Sacraments signifie him and seal him. The Law is a *School-master to lead us unto Christ*; the Gospel offers him, and conveys him, our faith receives him, our love imbraces him, our hope expects him, our obedience imitates and honours him; the promises are grounded upon him; by the Gospel-priviledges purchased by him. Thus Christ is the Center, wherein all these lines of revealed truth meet; and when a Minister hath discovered Christ, he hath done all; and this he cannot do without the Scriptures, *Search the Scriptures, for they testify of me*, saith Christ, *John 5. 39.* We are *Embassadors for Christ*; and the Scriptures are our *Credential letters*, which contain all the terms of reconciliation and peace, upon which we must treat with rebellious sinners, and act for the interest of our great Lord and Master.

Gal. 3. 24.

2 Cor. 5. 20.

2. *That he may preach according to the analogie of faith:* which is the Apostles exhortation, *Rom. 12. 6.* let him that prophesieth prophesie according to the analogie of faith: *κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως*, according to the scope, consent, and harmonie of Scripture. Scripture is its own best interpreter: one Scripture gives light to another: as it was an ordinance of old for the Priest in the Temple to light one lamp by another; and the Jews were wont, when they read *Moses*, to read so much of the Prophets, as was most answerable to that part of the Law. To observe the consent of Scripture is an excellent means of understanding Christ. The Apostles themselves, though acted by the same infallible Spirit, yet alwaies quote Scripture: not so much to confirm their doctrine, as to demonstrate the harmonie of revealed truth, and so to explain obscurer Scripture by plainer; as *S. Peter* having alleadged that place, *Psal. 16. 10.* *Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell,* &c. which might seem obscure, he presently adds other Scriptures to prove that this could not be understood of *David*, but of Christ; as you may see *Acts 2. verse 30.*

*Acts 2. from v. 25. to 32.*

*2 Tim. 1. 13.*

A *Timothy* must have *κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν τῶν ὑγιαίνοντων λόγων*, a form of sound words; not onely some loose scattered confused notions of Truth, but a methodical orderly Systeme of Scripture-truth, that hereby discovering the dependance of one upon another, he may the more fully understand all.

*2 Tim. 2. 15.*

This notion of the Apostles *ῥηθὶ τοιῦτον*, rightly to divide the word of truth, to wit, according to Scripture-analogie and consent, cannot be done without a laborious studie, and perfect knowledge of the Scripture.

3. *That he may convince gainsayers:* which is a dutie the Apostle requires of every Minister, *τὸ ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν*.

Two sorts of Gainsayers a Minister is to grapple with,

1. Gainsayers in Opinion.

2. Gainsayers in Practice.

By Scripture-knowledge he may be able to convince both these.

1. Gainsayers in Opinion, whose errors contradict the truth of Scripture. And if ever it were necessarie to be armed against such, most certainly in our daies; wherein it is the height of many mens ambition, and a great attainment to be a Gainsayer to received and acknowledged truth. None so successfull conviction of such, as by Scripture-argument; if you alleadge and urge Reason, some of our Gainsayers are incapable of it, and will cast it off as Carnal; if Learning, too much (say they) makes you mad: but, as *David* said of *Goliath's sword*, there is none like that, no sword fitter to fight with these

*1 Sam. 17. 9.*



these opposers then the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, none like this; with this our Saviour routed Satan, the Prince of darkness, the father and patron of error; in three onsets; *Scriptures* *est*, &c. as thus afterwards our Saviour dealt with Satans compli-ces and abettors, as the *Sadduces*, who denied the resurrection. *Have ye not read* (he confutes them from *Exod. 3. 6.*) *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: God is not the God of the dead but of the living.* So the *Pharisees* error, concern-  
ing the lawfulness of divorce, Christ confutes from *Genes. 1. and 2.* *Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and they twain shall be one flesh?* and so forth. The Apostles afterwards trod in their Masters steps, and wrote af-ter his Copie. *Stephen* confutes the Jews by epitomizing the hi-  
storie of the Old Testament: *S. Paul* confutes the Idolatrie of the *Athenians*, from *Psal. 50. 8.* *Who giveth us life, and breath, and all things*, as you may see. And this was one effect of *Apollos* his ac-  
curateness in the Scripture, that *St. Aquinas*, he convinced the con-  
tradieting, and gainsaying Jews, that *Jesus was Christ*. So true is that of *Tertullian*, that Hereticks are *lucifuga Scripturarum*; they hate the light of the Scriptures, lest their errors should be detect-  
ed and reprov'd. The Papiests denie the people the use of Scripture upon this pretence, lest it should breed errors: the truth is, lest it should discover, and confute them. He that doth truth, comes to the light, but error hates it. Thus the *Manichees* error, of God being the cause of sin, flees the light of those Scriptures, *Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness*; and, *A God of purer eyes than to be-  
hold sin*; and *He that doth sin is of his father the devil*. So the *Pe-  
lagian* error of *Free-will*, and the *Power of corrupted nature*, flees the light of those Scriptures, *Without me you can do nothing*, saith Christ; and, *God worketh both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. The *Antinomian* doctrine cannot bear the light of those Scriptures, *I came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it*; and, *Do we make void the Law by faith? God forbid: nay, we stablish the Law*. An induction of particulars would be too tedious; but this in general, that opinion which the Scripture confutes not, either is no error at all, or, be sure, of no dangerous consequence in point of salva-  
tion.

2. Gainsayers in practice, who contradict the purity of the Go-  
spel by holding the truth in unrighteousness and turning Gospel-  
grace into wantonness; and these are more frequent then the former. Many profess Gospel-truth, yet do not embrace Gospel-ho-  
liness: these are to be convinced by Scripture, as our Saviour did the Pharisees of hypocrisy from the Prophet *Esay*, *This people draw-*  
*eth*

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Mat. 4. 7.

Mat. 22. 32.

Mat. 19. 4.  
5, 6.

Acts 7.

Acts 17. 23.

Acts 18. 29.

De resur. car.

Rom. 8. 31.

Psal. 5. 4.

Habak. 1. 13.

1 John 3. 8.

Joh. 13. 5.

Phil. 2. 13.

Mat. 5. 17.

Rom. 3. 31.

Mat. 23. 7.

Esay 29. 13.

Ephes. 5. 13. *eth near unto me with their mouth and their lip, but their heart is far from me. All things, which are reprov'd, are made manifest by the light; that is to say, by the light of the Scriptures. There is a searching power in the word of God, which is quick, and powerfull, and sharper then any two-edged sword, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart; and if it be powerfully and wisely managed, how may a Moses make the heart of a Pharaoh sometimes relent? a Nathan make a David weep? a Paul put a Felix into a state of trembling? and a Peter make the Jews pricked at the heart? and a John Baptist convince a Herod of his unlawfull and wicked enjoyment of his beloved Herodias? How doth the word of God oft drive men from those forts, and succours and delusions which they had framed to deceive themselves, and encourage themselves in the ways of sin? as, others sin as well as I: what saith Scripture to this? Follow not a multitude to commit iniquity; and, Though hand joyn in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished. I may deferre my repentance from youth to old age, saith another: See what Scripture saith to this, Remember thy Creatour in the daies of thy youth, &c. and, To day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. This is but a peccadillo, saith another: Scripture saith, The ways of sin is death. Such flatteries and deceits the deceitfull heart of man is apt to gull it self with. The power of the word is to such as the voice of God was to Adam, Where art thou? and then he could lie hid no longer: it convinceth and discovers them. This is the effect of preaching the word, as the Apostie saith, If all prophesie, (to wit, of the nature of sin, Gods wrath against it, and the like, as Pareus glosses) if there come in one that believeth not, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, and the secrets of his heart are made manifest. When a reverend Divine amongst our selves, had by a powerfull Sermon convinced a licentious wretch, who heard him, he fretting and very angry (as wicked men comonly are at a convincing Minister) came to him and charged him with preaching that Sermon against him out of malice and envy; he returned him this answer, If this Sermon had been preached in the dark, when I could not have seen my Auditors, this very word of God would have found thee out, and convinced thee of thy sins. In a word, Rectum & verum est mensura sui & obliqui: therefore Scripture containing all fundamental doctrines of faith, and essential duties of holiness necessary to salvation, must consequently be sufficient to confute, and reprove all contrary sin and error.*

Mr. Dod.

Mal. 2. 7. *4. That he may instruct the people and inform them of their whole duty. Here they must expect, and require their knowledge, for, The Priests lips shall preserve knowledge, and the people shall require it at his*



his mouth. Unless their doctrine distill as the dew, the field of the Lord, the Church, must needs be barren in holiness and fruitless in knowledge. This is the last use the Apostle saith the Scripture is profitable for, *utrumque in doctrinam: for instruction in righteousness.*

2 Tim. 3. 18.

True indeed (may the people say) it is fit and necessary, that *Apollos's*, Ministers, should be mighty in the Scriptures: but, we hope, we may be excused from searching the Scriptures, it is not our duty, we are to expect it from our teachers.

Objection.

Indeed this is *Rome's* language. If you were at *Rome*, you might be exempted; that Church will gratify you in this and thank you too: they account it no better to suffer lay-men to read the Bible, then *sanctum canibus, margaritas ante porcos projicere*, (it is the expression of *Hosius*) to cast pearls before swine or that which is holy to dogs: you are little beholding to them for this. But, believe it, though Antichrist will exempt you from reading the Scripture, Christ will not, who enjoynes it, as a duty upon all to search the Scriptures: and observe the argument he useth to enforce this duty, *for in them ye think to have eternal life*. If then you expect any interest in that happiness, you are concerned, and engaged in this duty of Scripture-search, which is both commanded and commended in Scripture. Let the word of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom, saith *S. Paul*: and it was the commendation of the *Bereans*, that they searched the Scriptures daily, whether the things that *Paul* and *Silas* preached were true or no.

Answer.

Joh. 5. 39.

Colos. 3. 16.  
Acts. 17. 11.

The Church of *Rome* accuse, and charge this promiscuous searching of the Scripture as the cause of Heresy, pride, and faction. I deny not, Scripture misunderstood is sometimes abused to promote these ends: but this is not the natural, and proper effect of reading the Scripture, the ignorance of which, if we believe our Saviour, is the cause of Heresy, and error. *Ye erre*, saith Christ to the Sadduces, *not knowing the Scriptures*: and indeed if wee be robbed of the Compass of Scripture, we must needs split upon the rock of error. In a word then, it is the Tyrannie of *Rome* to withhold it, and it will be your sin to neglect it.

Matt. 22. 29.

## Application.

1. This condemns, and corrects that general neglect and undervaluing of Scripture: which (now *Atheisme* is justly feared to be growing upon us) prevails in the world, men preferring every thing else before this. The *Papist* exalts his unwritten Tradition above the written Word. *Pari pietatis affectu suscipimus & veneramus*, may seem a modest determination of the *Tridentine* convention, and much

Pfal. 119. 10.  
Pfal. 119. 72.  
Job 23. 12.

less then their practise speaks. The *Enthusiast* magnifies his pretended revelation, and Scripture to him is but a *dead letter*, and the searcher of it but *literals*, and *vocalis* too. But let us return home, and see whither we can plead not guilty: where are our *Nepotians*, who by diligent perusal of the Scripture, make their souls *Bibliothecam Christi*, as *Hierom* saith of him? Where shall we finde an *Alphonsus*, who is reported to have read the Bible ten times over with a comment? or like that *Transylvanian Prince*, whom *Mac-covius* reports to have read the Bible over twentie seven times? Where shall we finde a *David*, who meditates in the Law of God day and night, preferring it before the honey and the honey-combe, before thoughts of gold and silver? or a *Job*, who esteemeth the words of Gods mouth more then his necessarie food? Nay, have we not many proud, cursed *Politians*, who think it a disparagement to their parts and learning, to condescend to the studie of Scripture, and (as he said) think they never spend their time worse then in reading it? Do not idle *Romances*, and lascivious Poems, and the like, take up the most of our youth-studies? nay, amongst us who look towards the Ministrie, doth not a nice and intricate *School-man*, an uncertain *Father*, an antiquated *Rabby*, juggle out the Scripture? I speak not against those in their due order and measure; but I would not have *Hagar* drive *Sarah* out of doors. I would not have the *Hand-maids* courted, and the *Mistress* neglected. If they be our *παρρηγοι*, let Scripture be our *εργον*. Preposterous studying these, before we be well grounded and settled in Scripture-knowledge, doth oft fill the soule with such notions, speculations, and prepossessions, as we shall finde it very hard afterwards to vail and submit to the simplicitie, and truth of the Gospel. Nay, if the most pious, practically, devout writings of men, (with which this age to the glorie of it abounds) hinder our studie of Scripture, it is our sin and provocation, and a high disparagement of the word of God. Nor indeed can we with the same confidence and securitie read them, as being oft mixed with error, interest, and inconsiderate zeal, and those other imperfections, which the frailtie of the best spirit be- traies them to (as waters though never so pure in the fountain, will relish of that mine they run through): as we may promise our selves from these Oracles of God, penned by the unerring dictates and guidance of the Spirit of God. It is well known what worth *Luther's* works are of, yet he professeth, *Odi libros meos, & sape opto interire, quod metuo ne morentur lectores, & abducant a lectione ipsius Scripturae, quae sola omnis sapientia fons est.* That he hated his own books, and oft wished them perished, lest they should be a means to with- draw men from the studie of the Scripture, which is the onely fountain of true and saving wisdom.



2. This should put every one of us upon the search and studie of Scripture, Which that we may do successfully,

1. Be much in prayer: that's the key to unlock these cabinets of precious jewels. S. Augustine hath two remarkable stories to this purpose; the one of Antonius the Hermite, who was so devoted to the thought of God, that he could, though he knew not one letter, fully understand, and by heart repeat the whole Scripture: the other of a certain servant converted from Heathenisme to Christianitie, who, *triduanis precibus obtinuit, & codicem oblatum stupentibus, qui aderant, legendo percurreret*, by three days continuing in prayer had such revelations, that, to the admiration of the beholders, he could read the whole Bible. This is the course the Wiseman directs to, Prov. 2. 3, 4, 5. If thou searchest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, &c. Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and finde the knowledge of God. This S. James exhorts to, James 1. 5. If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God. This David praesides, Open my eyes (as he praies to God, Psal. 119. 18) that I may see wondrous things out of thy Law. The Spirit is the best, nay onely revealer, and true interpreter of Scripture. What is said of the Jews, that when Moses is read the veil is upon their heart, may be said of every one, who is not enlightened by the Spirit of God, whose eyes are not anointed with this eye-salve, a veil of flesh, a veil of ignorance, a veil of corruption is upon their hearts. To think to discover the things of the Spirit, without the Spirit, is to dream of seeing without light: now prayer is the way to come to the Spirit. How shall not your heavenly Father (saith Christ, Luke 11. 13.) give the holy Spirit to them that ask him.

2. Avoid a proud and prying curiositie: this darkens Scripture, when men are not content to know what God would have revealed, but wrest out of the Scriptures what was never intended in them. These are those *in speculis*, which S. Peter speaks of, 2 Pet. 3. 16. to whom he therefore saith, the Scriptures are dark and obscure: who play the Chymists with Scripture, and, as they endeavour to do with natural bodies, extort that out of them, which God and nature never put into them. How have the forced Allegories, obscure Cabbalas, impertinent nice Criticisms obscured and darkned revealed truth? which I am so charitable as to think rather Essays for exercising mens wits, then for interpreting and clearing the Scripture.

I think it a good way to understand Scripture, never to leave the literal sence, unless when it is inconsistent and repugnant to the analogie of faith, then we must seek a figurative, else not; as when we are commanded to pluck out our right eye, and cut off our right

who shall decide?

hand, which in the letter is repugnant to the command of not killing, this must be interpreted figuratively of parting with our nearest and dearest corruptions, which are as near and dear unto us as a right hand, or a right eye.

3. Resolve to practise what you read and understand in Scripture: this is the reason men profit no more in the Scriptures, they hear out of fashion and custome, they read out of curiositie, not conscience. It is grace in the heart, and obedience in the life, which makes men fruitfull in Scripture-knowledge: upon which the Apostle Peter grounds his exhortation, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7. to adde to our faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, &c. he subjoyns the reason, v. 8, 9. If these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall not be barren and unfruitfull in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ; but he that lacketh these things is blinde. The Turk writes upon the out-side of his Alkoran, Let no man touch this book, but he that is pure; and the Philosopher gives this reason, why a young man cannot be a profitable scholar in Morallitie, because guided by lust and passion; and the Apostle gives the same reason, why some were ever learning, and could never come to the knowledge of the truth, because they were led away by divers lusts: on the contrarie, nothing improves knowledge more then holiness, which David gives as an account of his knowledge, Psal. 119. 100. I understand more then the Ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

4. Be diligent in reading the Scriptures, which was Pauls charge to Timothy, 1 Tim. 4. 13. Give attendance to reading, make it thy work and business. God is not wanting to the diligent and constant searchers of Scripture. When the Eunuch was reading the Prophet Esay, God provides him an instructor, sends Philip to him to teach him.

I shall end all this with the exhortation of S. Paul, Coloss. 3. 16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; and S. Peters conclusion of his Epistles (2 Pet. 3. 18.) shall be the Conclusion of my Sermon; Grow in grace and in the Scripture-knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to him be glory both now and for ever.

A M E N.

FINIS.

Arift. lib. 1.  
Ethic. cap. 3.

2 Tim. 3. 6, 7.

Acts. 8. 9.



THESIS  
DE FIDE  
JUSTIFICANTE  
SUB RATIONE  
INSTRUMENTI.

*Quam*  
SUB PRÆSIDIO  
ANTONII TUCKNEY,  
S. T. D.

Ac in eadem Professoris Regii, Kalend. Julii,  
1656. in die Comitiorum  
CANTABRIGIÆ

Tuebatur  
JOANNES FROST,  
Collegii D. Joannis ibidem Socius,  
pro gradu Baccalaureatus in  
*Theologia.*



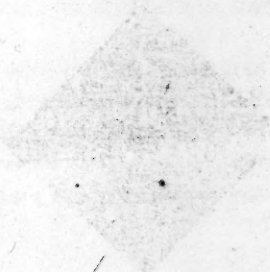
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THESE  
DE FIDE  
JUSTIFICANTE  
SUBRATONE  
INSTRUMENTE

ANTONIO THORNTON  
SUBPRÆSIDIO  
S. T. D.

Ac in eadem Prothonotariis Regis, Kalamazoo, Mich.  
1876. in die (certificata)  
CANTABRIGIE

JOHNES POST  
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ORNATISSIMO DIGNISSIMOQUE  
VIRGO,  
ANTONIO TUCKNEY,  
SS. Theologiae Doctore, Collegii Divi Johannis  
PRAEFECTO,  
& in Academia Cantabrigiensi  
Professori Regio.



Non est instituti mei (*Reverende Professor*) quorumcunq; oblocutorum exceptionibus, in quas praefatio haec incursura sit, obviam ire: mihi abunde satisfactum erit, si ea, quae ad haec impulerunt, pietati Tuae breviter exposuero. Inter alia, quae filius charissimus, & nunquam satis lugendus, mecum nuncupatorie reliquit; hoc unicum praecipue in votis habuit, ut siquid Theseos, vel Concionis hujus Typis mandaretur, sub Tui nominis Auspicio in lucem prodiret. Huic fidei-commisso eo libentius morem gessi, quo singularem erga Te observantiam testatam facerem, & aliquantulum pro eximia Tua in illum benevolentia gratitudinis <sup>τεμπριον</sup> exhiberem. Alio insuper jure Exercitationes hae patrocinium Tuum ambiunt, utpotè autoritate Tuâ, Tuoque consilio initæ, & peractæ.

peractæ. Lege cautum est, *Liberos Filii, licet e-*  
*mancipati, si decesserit, in avi potestatem incidere.*  
Hoc ipso nomine Authorem astrictum tenuisti:  
nè graveris filii Tui Posthumum, patrèque or-  
batum in legitimam tutelam accipere. Dum e-  
go luctu & mæstitiâ penè obrutus effundam vo-  
ta, ut Deus gratiæ gratiâ Te ditatum augeat  
provehâtque, ut Ecclesiam, Collegium, & Ca-  
thedram ornare pergas diutissimè.

*Reverentiæ vestræ*

*observantissimus,*

JOAN. FROST.



## Thesis.

## Fides justificat sub ratione instrumenti.

**I**dem justificare in presenti questione supponimus, ut ab omnibus Theologis ultro concessam veritatem: Neque de justificationis vocabulo litem movebimus, quippe quod sensu torensi & judiciali, ex idiomate cum Ebraico, tum Græco, usitatissimo insuper Scripturæ dicendi modo, accipi debere (exceptis Pontificiis) abunde satis inter nos & Adversarios convenit. Quid per Fidem volumus luculenter constabit ex actu ejus formali, quem statuimus esse, non nudum assensum cum Pontificiis, nec *τῆς σπουδῆς*, seu de salute certiorationem (nè scrupulos & laqueos conscientis infirmorum injiciamus): sed fiducialem innitentiam, sen recumbentiam in Christum, quem in fœdere Evangelico oblatum statuimus esse objectum specificum fidei justificantis. Fidei qua justificat objectum generale asserimus esse totum Dei verbum; speciale, Christum Mediatorem; formale quod justificat, Christum ut Pontificem, Sacerdotem, ut *ἱερέα* & pretium redemptionis nostræ; non quòd Christi officia in negotio justificationis disjungimus, sed distinguimus: quam distinctionem, quia ut levvidensem, & lusoriam sugillant Adversarii, pari instantiâ visum est dilucidare. Ac si quis morbo laborans & in mortis confinio positus, virum adiret curationem ab eo & salutem expectans, petens quem Theologum, Furis-consultum, Medicum simul probè nôrit: ei dubio procul innititur & confidit, quàm Medicus, non quàm Theologus, aut Furis-consultus; etiamsi sit hæc omnia, & singulis horum pro re nata fungatur officiis. Suffragatur Scriptura, capitis ad Romanos quinti versu nono; *ἀγαπᾷς τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτὸν*. Modus autem, quo Fides justificat, impræsentiarum controversitur; de quo quinque observavimus celebriorum Theologorum opiniones.

Prima est eorum, qui existimant Fidem justificare declarativè tantum, & quoad sensum conscientie internum. Hæc Helena, hæc Diana Antinomorfi; quibus calculum adiecit acutissimus Maccovius, apud quem fide justificari nil aliud est, quàm quòd fide cognoscimus, & sentimus nos esse justos coram Deo. Hujus sententia Hyperaspistes in diversæ erunt sententias. Strenuus ille Gratia divinae assertor, & Remonstrantium Malleus (non sine aliquo honoris titulo nominandus) Twissius, ab æterno factam electorum omnium justificationem voluit. Nuper laudatus Maccovius ab eo tempore quo Christus promissus est in Mediatorem, Geneleos capitis tertii versu decimo-quinto. Crispus, An-

Pag. 79.

tinomorum Antesignanus & Coryphaeus, in morte Crucis, cum pœnas peccatis nostris debitas persolvit Christus, nos à reatu solutos, & iustificatos asserit. Alii justificationem fieri volunt, cum Spiritus nos Christo unit; quam unionem fidei antecedaneam asserunt, quâ accedente dehinc oritur justificationis nostræ sensus.

Secunda est eorum, qui fidem volunt iustificare dispositivè & inchoativè, in quantum radix est ceterarum virtutum, & qualitativa preparatio subjecti ad justificationis privilegium. Cui porro adiungunt Bellarminus, & Concilium Tridentinum, spem, timorem, dilectionem, pœnitentiam, propositum suscipiendi Sacramentum, & propositum novæ vitæ. Nudum assensum volunt esse dispositionem, fidem charitate formatam partem istius iustitiæ inherentis, quâ coram Deo iustificamur: hanc sententiam sanctis suffragiis Pontificii profitentur.

Tertia est eorum, qui volunt fidem iustificare formaliter, in quantum actus fidei est res imputata, & à Deo virinte secundi Fœderis, per gratiosam acceptilationem habita loco istius perfectæ iustitiæ, quam primum Fœdus postulabat. Hanc amplectuntur Sociniani & Remonstrantes. Fides est objectum imputationis, inquit Arminius, epistola ad Hippolytum. Deo visum est fidem nostram iustitiæ loco nobis ducere; ita Socinus. Sed plenissimè hanc explicant sententiam Remonstrantes Dordrechtani. Fœdus illud novæ gratiæ, quod Deus Pater per mortis Christi interventum cum hominibus pepigit, non in eo consistit, quod per fidem, quatenus meritum Christi apprehendit, coram Deo iustificemur; sed in hoc, quod abrogatâ perfectæ obedientiæ legalis exactione, fidem ipsam & fidei obedientiam imperfectam pro perfectâ legis obedientia reputet, & vitæ æternæ premio gratiosè dignam censeat.

Quarta est eorum, qui volunt fidem iustificare conditionaliter, quatenus una cum sincera obedientia est conditio novi Fœderis, & causa sine qua non justificationis. In hanc sententiam eunt Doctores Sociniani. Obedientia, quam Christo præstamus, licet nec efficiens nec meritoria, tamen causa sine qua non est justificationis coram Deo: Verba sunt Anonymi Scriptoris Sociniani. Fides non est accuratè loquendo, causa instrumentalis; sed sine qua non justificationis nostræ: hinc enim dicitur nos fide iustificari, inquit Smalcus. Diligenter cavere debemus, nè vitæ sanctitatem & innocentiam causam justificationis nostræ vel efficientem, aut impulsivam esse affirmamus, sed tantummodo causam, sine qua eam nobis non contingere decrevit Deus. Verba sunt Socini in Synopsi justificationis. Non difficile esset plura id genus, è Crellii, Volkelii, Socini scriptis proferre testimonia, ni vobis et tudio esset et fastidio. Hæc obiter notare visum est, ut sentiamus quàm dolendum sit, è nostris etiam Theologis quosdam, eosque

Lib. 4. de  
Servatore,  
cap. 4.  
Pag. 291.

Disput. 4.  
contr. Fratz.



eosque (quod dolendum magis adhuc) cum eruditione, tum pietate insignes, sub infelici hoc Socinianorum vexillo militare: utque intelligant juvenes se, dum in hanc opinionem vel cæcâ temeritate, vel nimâ virorum admiratione abrepti, præcipites se dent, Socini, Hæreticorum pessimi, premere vestigia.

Quinta et ultima est eorum, qui volunt fidem justificare instrumentaliter, relativè seu organicè, in quantum respicit objectum justificans, Christum nimirum, cujus respectu capacitatem habet admittendam et receptivam. Hac receptissima est Theologorum celeberrimorum sententia, à qua mihi religio est vel latum unguem discedere: utpote quâ longissime abest ab Hæreticorum erroribus, omnem præripit hominibus gloriandi ansam, operum elevat dignitatem, totamque justificationis gloriam Deo et Christo in solidum tribuit. Non vos latet (Viri, Patres, Fratresque) quàm perplexa et nodosa sit hæc justificationis doctrina, quanta de causa formali, meritoria, & id genus aliis in Scholis agitantur lites, quantoque cum sententiarum animorumque divortio. Inter omnes autem super hoc fundamentali religionis nostræ articulo controversias, hæc, quam præ manibus habemus (si Chemnitio fides sit habenda) non infima nota est; cujus verba (ne videar hodie de lana caprina, aut rei nullius momenti, litem movisse, usque, si quod sit in Auditorum mentibus, amoliar præjudicium) lubet hic referre. Controversia (inquit ille in loco de justificatione) de causa instrumentali una est ex præcipuis, hanc enim doctrinam Diabolus odiosius oppugnat; quia bene nôrit causas efficientes sine applicatione non prodesse nobis ad salutem, ideo spargit varias corruptelas, applicationem fieri operibus, vel propriis, vel alienis, vel fide & operibus simul. Et alibi omne suum artificium eo confert, ut organum applicationis vel eripiat, vel labefactet, vel depravet: quod totis viribus conati sunt Pontificii, Sociniani, utinam et non è nostris nonnulli.

Totam quam suscepimus provinciam eâ, quam rei majestas patitur, et loci vestrumque ratio posulat, brevitate, quinque conclusionibus expediam.

Conclusio prima. Justificatio fidei non est declarativa quoad sensum, sed constitutiva quoad statum. Cujus ratio in promptu est: quod sensus justificationis oritur ex actu reflexo, ipsa justificatio ex actu directo fidei in Christum recumbentis. Quin et justificari dicimur *ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ*, coram Deo: Ergo non terminativè tantum in conscientia. Justificationis insuper sensum amitti posse, & à justificato abesse experiuntur sæpius & conqueruntur Sancti. Hinc ille Davidis lacryma, hinc frequentes Sanctorum planctus gemitusque. Imò diu sæpius est priusquam Sancti assurgere possint ad sensum justificationis suæ: qui postea per recidivationes peccatorum labefactatur, imò obruitur. Sen-

Rom. 3.20.

Rom. 5.1.

XX

*sua insuper favoris divini fructus est, non essentia justificationis: inquit Apostolus. Cetera virtutes, ut fructus Spiritus, & justificationis merita, nos justos declarant, nullibi tamen iis justificationem adscribit Scriptura. Et ut hac veritas extra omnem controversiam ponatur aleam, perpendite locum Apostoli (ad Romanos cap. 5. vers. 19.) Sicut per inobedientiam unius illius hominis peccatores constituti sunt multi, sic per obedientiam unius (scilicet Christi à Deo imputatam, & fide apprehensam) singulis nostris: ergo non solum declarativè in conscientia. Ut autem antedictis erroribus tempestivè occurramus, dicimus*

*Primò, Justificationem ab æterno factam non esse. Agnoscimus quid analogum justificationi in decreto Dei; quod tamen, cum sit actio immanens, non est productivum effectus ad extra; neque aliquam efficit realem mutationem in subjecto: quæ ubicunque fit, sive moraliter, sive Physicè, necessariò fit per actionem transeuntem. Trium est in Scholis, Prædestinationem nihil ponere in Prædestinato. Justificationis insuper decretum supponit solum esse cognitum, actualis justificatio persona postulat existentiam: enimvero ubi nullus realis reatus, ibi absolutio actualis impossibilis est. Quod enim Maccovius cum Antinomis objicit, res scilicet ab æterno habere esse cognitum, nihil est, quippe quod præcognitio divina, cum sit actus immanens, nil ponit in objecto. Neque diffitemur justificationem habere esse cognitum in mente divina ab æterno, quæ, cum per actionem transeuntem completur, fit mutatio in subjecto, non in Deo; quia actiones transeuntes dant solum extrinsecas denominationes Deo. Non dissimili modo, ac si Architectus secum hodie statueret cras domum adificare, exstructâ domo, mutatio transit in objectum, manente Architecti proposito. Et, ut quod res est dicam, verè portentosa est hæc æterna justificatio. Elevat merita Christi, inania reddit omnia justificationis media, non liceret (quod Sanctis semper in usu fuisse legimus) remissionem peccatorum, sed remissionis sensum à Deo petere: hinc sequeretur perinde justos esse electos antecedenter ad fidem ac post fidem; imò filios esse Dei quos Scriptura pronuntiat filios iræ.*

Ephes. 1.3.

*Secundò, Neque quamprimùm facta est promissio justificari dicimur, nisi virtualiter: hoc est, impletâ conditione, quæ fit per fidem. Certitudinem futuritionis fundatam asserimus in promisso, quo fidelitate suâ Deus se electis obstringit, ob interventum satisfactionis Christi, & beneficium sub conditione, & ipsam conditionem ex gratuita misericordia conferre.*

2 Cor. 5.19.

XX

*Tertiò, Neq; in morte Christi justificari dicuntur electi. Justificationem meritoriam in morte Christi agnoscimus, dicente Apostolo, Deus erat in Christo mundum reconcilians sibi: hoc est, quoad pretii solutionem & dationem; cujus beneficium voluit in credentes solum re-*  
dunda-



dundare. Per seipsum fecit purificationem peccatorum nostrorum, ad Hebræos cap. 1. ver. 3. hoc est; quoad pretium, & sacrificii perfectionem. Fide opus esse asserimus, non ad solutionem, sed ad applicationem. Partum est jus ad justificationem morte Christi, actualiter sit fide. Ut debitor absolvatur, requiritur non solum solutio debiti à creditore facta, sed desideratur insuper acquiescentia creditoris in ista solutione, & acceptatio à parte debitoris, quâ sibi propriam faciat. Facillimè hac ad justificationem accommodantur, ad quam requiritur, præter acquiescentiam Patris in solutione pretii à sponsore nostro facti, applicatio, & receptio fidei: Ut pharmacum, a peritissimo licet medico præparatum, & morbo accommodatissimum, agrote tamen non valet ad salutem, nisi sumatur. Omnes promiscuè sub condemnatione, & maledictione legis, irâ Dei, potestate mortis esse, antecedenter ad fidem pronunciat Scriptura, non obstante Christi satisfactione in cruce factâ. An Christus loco electorum erat justificatus & absolutus (quam justificationem mysticam vocat è nostris vir doctus) mihi, fateri, adhuc non constat, neque sum ausus, tacente Scripturâ, definire.

Quartò, Falsissimum, utpote cum ἐργασίαν αὐτοῦ, commentum est, dari unionem cum Christo antecedenter ad fidem, cum spiritus nos Christo unit ingenerando fidem in cordibus nostris. Operantem spiritum agnoscimus antecedenter ad fidem, saltem ordine naturæ; ac inhabitantem, & nos Christo agglutinantem negamus. Inhabitat Christus per fidem in cordibus vestris, inquit Apostolus ad Ephesios, cap. 3. ver. 17. Et, Promissum spiritum accipimus per fidem, ad Galatas, cap. 3. ver. 14.

Ex supradictis constabit justificationem fieri in tempore, & concomitantè ad fidem, eodem tempore, licet diverso naturæ, instanti, & fieri per actionem transeuntem, cujus effectus est mutatio moralis, non quoad sensum solum, sed quoad statum.

Conclusio secunda. Fides non justificat per modum dispositionis, aut præviæ, & inherētis qualitatibus. Hoc Pontificiorum commentum est, quorum opus hoc in re esse videretur, quod justificationem fieri volunt per motum physicum, productivum justitiæ inherētis per modum formæ: ad cuius introductionem fidem (hoc est, modum assensum) timorem, spem, id genus alias dispositiones, ut substantiam qualitativè præparantes, postulant; prout factum cernimus in ordine ad productionem formarum physicarum: cum nos asserimus in justificatione fieri non physicam & positivam, sed moralem & relativam notationem, uti infra plentiùs patebit. Sufficiat interim monere præparatoriam hanc fidei justificationem repugnare,

Primò, Scripturæ.

Secundò, Rationi.

Tertiò, Doctrinæ Pontificiæ.

Rom. 5. 17.

*Primo, Scripturæ, quæ nullibi dicit fidem disponere ad justificationem, sed justificare seu recipere donum justitiæ absque operibus. At quocunque nomine vocetur hac dispositio, sub operibus comprehenditur, ut disertè loquitur Apostolus ad Romanos, cap. 9. ver. 30. Quid igitur dicimus? Gentes, quæ non sectabantur justitiam, justitiam apprehendisse; Ergo sine operibus preparatoriis. Impios insuper (videlicet antecedenter, licet non reduplicativè & consequenter tales) Deum justificare asserit idem Paulus ad Romanos, cap. 4. vers. 5. ideoque non per fidem, spem, timorem, id genus alias dispositiones preparatos.*

Jac. 2. 19.

*Secundo, Rationi: quia hæ dispositiones Hypocritis, imò demonibus insunt, qui credunt & contremiscunt. Pessimè insuper sanctificationem cum justificatione confundunt Pontificii, quæ, cum non introducit in subjectum, sed per imputationem fit, non eget preparatoriis dispositionibus.*

Rom. 3. 28.

*Tertiò, Doctrinæ Pontificiæ. Quomodo enim hoc de dispositionibus preparatoriis dogma cum opere operato Sacramentorum coheret (quod junctim profitentur Pontificii) ipsi viderint, vos judicate. Concludimus cum Apostolo, Hominem justificari fide, non solum ergò ad justificationem disponi.*

*Conclusio tertia. Fides non justificat formaliter, ità ut vel habitus vel actus fidei à Deo nobis imputeretur ad justitiam, virtute Novi Fœderis. Tum quia hoc modo considerata est pars inhærentis justitiæ, & propriæ, quam tamen Apostolus justitiæ, quâ justificamur, è diametro opponit, ad Philippenses, cap. 3. vers. 9. Ut comperiar in Christo, *ἵνα ἔχω ἵπὸν δικαιοσύνης, ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ.* Actus fidei opus est, ideoque fidei, in quantum justificat, contradicitur, ut liquet ex Apostolo, ad Romanos, cap. 4. ver. 5. Ei qui non operatur, sed credit, &c. quæ verba si de actu fidei interpretemur sensus loci esset, Ei qui non operatur sed qui operatur fides imputatur ad justitiam; ità versu sexto, David beatum declarat, cui Deus imputat justitiam absq; operibus, quod perinde esset juxta hanc opinionem, ac si dixisset Apostolus, Cui Deus imputat opus sine operibus. Dogma profectò hoc est periculosum adeò, ut totam evertit justificationis doctrinam, imputationem justitiæ Christi destruit, & inanem reddit; legem ex parte saltem abrogat, quippe cui fides, cum sit virtus particularis, non adequatè respondet; Deum insimulat falsæ æstimationis & judicii erronei, quippe qui imperfectum instar perfecti duceret; justificationis intercisionem ponit, cessante videlicet credendi actu. Quin & ipsa Fides ob multiplices, quibus laborat, imperfectiones eget misericordiâ divinâ. Quod autem ad gratiosam acceptilationem confugiant, oritur ex malè intellecta secundi Fœderis gratia, quæ in eo non consistit, quod Deus minorem nunc quàm olim postulat obedientiam, siquidem lex creationis est in-*

dispen-



dispensabilis; sed quod eam obedientiam, quam nos praestando non eramus in Mediatoris persona gratiose acceptar, (cū lex personalem postulabat iustitiam) & fide applicatam, misericorditer, virtute secundi Foederis nobis imputat, ut materiam nostrae iustificationis. Quod attinet ad locū illum Apostoli, quem substernunt Adversarii, ut erroris huius fundamentum, ad Romanos, cap. 4. ver. 3. Credidit Abrahamus Deo, & imputatum est ei ad iustitiam; interpretemur necessum est, vel, de iustitia facti non personae, sicut actus Phineae (Psalmo 106. ver. 31.) dicitur reputari ei in iustitiam; hoc est, probatus erat Deo actus: vel, si de iustitia personae, quod respicere videtur Apostolus, intelligimus fidem meronymicē, relativē, concretivē, seu connotativē cum objecto quod apprehenditis. Cuius veritas liquet tum ex contextu, ver. 11. vocatur dignus ut in eis mereatur, & ver. 13. dicitur dignus ut mereatur: Tum ex paritate phrasium in Scriptura, Petrus Apostolus secundam scribit Epistolam τοῖς ἰσχυροῦς ἡμῶν ἀρχαῖοις κλητοῖς, iis qui aequē preciosam fidem cum ipsis Apostolis sortiti sunt. Quī verō hoc fieri possit ut quilibet fidelium parem cum Apostolis fidem habeat? non in habitu, qui fortior multo, nec respectu actus, qui vegetior longē erat in Apostolis quā in inferiori Christianorum plebe: ideoque relinquatur ut sit respectu objecti, Christi nimirum, quem totum infimus credentium amplectitur. ἰσχυροῦς κλητοῖς vocat Apostolus, non quod in omnibus sit aequalis, sed quia eundem omnes Christum, eiusque iustitiam fide possident, inquit Calvinus.

Patet insuper ex analogia fidei, quā ubique in Scriptura predicatur iustitia Christi, non solum ut causa meritoria, (quod ipsi fatentur Pontificii) sed materialis iustificationis nostrae. Per obedientiam unius iusti constituuntur multi, ad Romanos, cap. 5. ver. 19. Christus à Deo nobis factus est iustitia, 1 Corinth. cap. 1. ver. 30. Nos effici-mur iustitia Christi in eo: 2 Corin. cap. 5. ver. 21.

Liquet etiam ex rei veritate, nisi enim fides consideretur objectivē, nemo fidelium ad statum iustificationis assurgeret, nisi qui gradum, & mensuram fidei Abrahamiticā attigit.

A phrasi denique Pauli alienum est, illud imputari quod inhaeret. Paulus illud imputari dicit, quod quis nec habet, nec fecit. Sic Deus peccata nostra imputavit Christo, quae ipse non fecit: pariter, quam nos non fecimus, nobis imputat iustitiam Christi. Hanc comparationem instituit Apostolus (Epistola ad Corinthios, cap. 5. ver. 21.) Fecit ut qui peccatum non novit, pro nobis peccatum esset, ut nos efficemur iustitia Dei in eo.

Conclusio quarta. Fides non iustificat, ut conditio sine qua non Foederis unā cum operibus, & nova obedientiā: vel ut concausa & sine qua non iustificationis. Fidem esse conditionem Foederis & causam sine qua non iustificationis tubenter agnoscimus, at sub ea rati-

Conclus. 4

one

one justificare fidenter negamus. Hoc enim concessio facultates animæ, intellectus, & voluntas, perinde dici possunt causæ justificationis, utpote sine quibus nemo justificatur. Fides ut conditio est in nobis, ea autem, quæ justificamur, justitia est extra nos, quam in hærenti opponit Apostolus, ad Philipenses, cap. 3. ver. 9. Obedientiam agnoscimus esse indispensabile medium salutis, negamus esse causam vel conditionem satisfactionis. Quam distinctionem, quia sugillant Adversarii, ex Scriptura liceat illustrare. Spe salvi sumus, inquit Apostolus ad Romanos, cap. 8. ver. 24. Nullibi dictum legimus, Spe justificati sumus. Coniunguntur fides & opera quoad existentiam, non quoad causalitatem. Opera removemus non à fide, sed à justificatione. Operum necessitatem profitemur, nè pietatis studio posthabito peccatis laxentur fræna; negamus operum causalitatem, nè gratia divina fiat præjudicium: Si enim ex operibus, tum non ex gratia, affirmante Apostolo. Quod enim obijciunt Adversarii, Apostolum vim justificandi præripere operibus ex natura factis, & fidem antecedentibus, non iis, quæ fidei fructus sunt, & à gratia promanant, tam falsum est, quàm quod falsissimum; quippe quod Apostolus excludit opera indefinitè, & sine aliquo additamento, etiam pii, & credentis Abrahami; ad Romanos, cap. 4. ver. 6. Beatus cui Deus imputat justitiam sine operibus, non addit legis, sed indefinitè qualibet opera excludit. Et versu 5. Ei qui non operatur, sed credit in eum, qui justificat impium, imputatur fides ad justitiam: quo in commate omnis operans opponitur credenti; ergo omnia, qualiacunque sint, opera opponuntur fidei. Neque Apostolus in tota hac disputatione, in qua ex professo de justificatione agit, opera operibus opponit, sed opera ubique & fidem, quantum ad justificationem, inter se committit. Neque agebatur tunc temporis controversia, an hac vel illa opera; sed an fides vel opera justificarent. Quam litem appositissimè dirimit Apostolus, ad Romanos, cap. 3. vers. 28. Non quædam ex multis singulis adpugnatorum xpeis & opor vobis. Quo additamento sæpius utitur Apostolus, non ut differentiam operum insinueret (opera enim, quæ ex gratia sunt, ad legis normam exiguntur): sed quia omnia à Deo in lege præcipiuntur. Imò sæpius in Scriptura Apostolus renatorum opera à justificatione removet. Ad Galatas, cap. 2. vers. 16. Scientes non justificari hominem ex operibus legis, sed per fidem Jesu Christi, etiam nos in Jesum Christum credidimus, ut justificaremur ex fide Christi: de se & Galatis loquitur jam renatis: aliquot enim jam annis antè Galatæ fuerat conversi, quàm Paulus illam scripsit epistolam. Quidni dicam materiam gloriandi subministrare vel opera renatorum, si per ea justificarentur? Non ex operibus, inquit Apostolus, nè quis gloriaretur: de operibus autem ex fide & gratia ortis loqui Apostolum patet ex proximo commate; Ipsius opus sumus creati in Christo Jesu ad opera bona. Sua etiam post conversionem (de præ-

Rom. 11. 6.

Ephes. 2. 9.



presenti enim loquitur ad Philippenſes, cap. 3. verſ. 8. ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν  
 τοῖς ὤφουσιν opera detrimenta pronuntiat, & ſtercora. Cū autem  
 Jacobus dicit hominem juſtificari operibus, non fide tantū, quod  
 Abrahami & Rahab probat exemplis, cap. 2. quod unicum erroris ſui  
 Adverſarii ponunt fundamentum, & cauſa praſidium; non abs re erit  
 Apoſtoloſ paucis conciliare. Quod facili fiet negotio, ſi Paulum de fide  
 viva, & per opera efficaci, de juſtificatione coram Deo, & de iis qui  
 opera jaſtabant, & propria juſtitia intumuerunt; Jacobum autem de  
 fide mortua operibus deſtituta, de juſtificatione coram hominibus, &  
 de ſolidianis, qui poſthabito pietatis ſtudio fidei larvam venditabant,  
 interpretemur. Quae ſingula ex ipſo patent contextu. Fidem, quam  
 intelligit Jacobus, demoniſtribuit verſu 19. & νεκρὰν vocat proxi-  
 mē inſequentē. Oſtende mihi fidem tuam, verſu 11. ergo de decla-  
 rativa loquitur juſtificatione. Quae utilitas, fratres, ſi quis dicat ſe fi-  
 dem habere; ergo eos alloquitur, qui inane jaſtabant fidei nomen, ope-  
 ribus vacuum, & à virtutis ſtudio alienum. Ut quod res eſt dicam,  
 Opera renatorum cum fide conjungere in negotio juſtificationis, eſt ſapius  
 coctam Pontificiorum Cramben recoquere: qui diſtinctionem hanc  
 operum, ante & poſt fidem centies noſtris objecere, quod juſtificationis  
 doctrinam per ſolam fidem labefactarent: qua olim prora puppisque  
 cauſa noſtra habita eſt, & primo jugulum petiit, & in prima reforma-  
 tione lethale incuſſit vulnus, & caput imminuebat cauſa Pontificia.  
 Fundamentum hoc Religionis noſtrae, articulus ſtantis eſt & cadentis  
 Eccleſiae, ut olim Lutherus. Galatas, ut à gratia & Evangelio apo-  
 ſtatas increpat Paulus eò, quod opera cum fide miſcebant in negotio ju-  
 ſtificationis, cap. 1. verſ. 6. Peſſimè certè de Religione noſtra meren-  
 tur, qui Pontificium hoc, imò purum putum Socinianum, dogma diu  
 ab Eccleſiis noſtris exauctoratum populo demum propinant. Opera  
 quae ex fide oriuntur, & ſunt fructus Spiritūs Sancti, adeò ad juſti-  
 ficationem neceſſaria ſunt, ut ſine illis fides apprehendens Chri-  
 ſtum juſtificare nullo modo poſſit: verba ſunt Andradii. In iis lo-  
 cis, ubi Apoſtolus fidem operibus opponit, de operibus ejuſmodi  
 agit, quae & perfectam, & perpetuam obedientiam continent, qua-  
 lem ſub lege Deus ab hominibus requirebat; verū non de iis ope-  
 ribus, quae obedientiam, quam Deus à nobis qui in Chriſtum cre-  
 dimus requirit, comprehendunt: verba legimus capite nono Cate-  
 cheſeos Racoviensis. Quae eo tranſcripſi conſilio, ut intelligamus ex  
 eorum lacunis, quorum vel nomen deteſtatur quilibet qui Chriſtianus  
 reverà vult audire, fluxiſſa putidam hanc de concauſalitate operum in  
 juſtificatione doctrinam.

Concluſio quinta & ultima. Fides juſtificat ſub ratione instru-  
 menti; cujus veritas per inductionem ex antedictis ſatis patet. Si  
 enim nec diſpoſitivè nec formaliter, nec conditionaliter juſtificat; re-

Concluſ. 5.

Lib. de justifi-  
cat. c. 2.

linquitur ut rationem instrumenti subeat in negotio justificationis. Cujus loco Sociniani Christum; Bellarminus humanitatem Christi; Concilium Tridentinum vel re, vel voto, susceptum Sacramentum; alii Fædus novum substituunt ut justificationis instrumentum. Nos brevitati litamus; sufficiat igitur in explicanda & confirmanda hac Thesi rerum capita delibare. Quod ut felicius fiat, hac pauca pramittenda duximus.

Primò, per [ fidem ] intelligimus habitum fidei, quatenus se exerit per actum, & respicit objectum; Christum videlicet & ejus justitiam; quo respectu dicimus eam esse anima instrumentum.

Secundo, [ justificare ] Sumitur vel activè, pro actu Dei judiciali; vel passivè & terminativè, prout in credentem terminatur. Fidem esse instrumentum asserimus, non respectu prioris, cujus causam in solo Dei favore & gratia quarimus, nobis quod nostrum non erat velut nostrum imputantis; sed posterioris: Ideoque ex instrumentalitate fidei malè colligitur ab Adversariis, hominem se justificare. Deus activè justificat credentem, homo non se justificat, sed credit ad sui justificationem ( ad Romanos, cap. 10. ver. 10. Corde creditur ad justitiam ) dum fide recipit Christum ejusque justitiam. Ideoque cum dicimus fidem justificare, passivè intelligi debet, & idem sonat ac fide justificamur, phrasi nimirum metalepticâ, quâ effectus cause principalis tribuitur instrumentali, ut aratrum dicitur dirare agricolam: instantia est Augustini.

Tertiò, duplex est instrumentum justificationis. Externum unum, videlicet Evangelium, quo offertur justificatio sub conditionibus Fæderis. Remotè Ministri Ecclesia dici possunt instrumenta justificationis: unde ligare, solvere, peccata remittere dicuntur in Scriptura, videlicet declarativè, applicando remissionem pœnitentibus & credentibus. Internum alterum, objecti justificantis applicativum, & tale instrumentum asserimus esse fidem: qua est quasi manus animæ applicantis, ut Evangelium est manus Dei offerentis justificationem.

Quarto, Instrumentum est vel Physicum, & Naturale; quod Physicè operatur ad effectum principalis agentis, & quo posito ex naturali necessitate effectus sequitur: vel morale, & ex institutione, per quod volumus omne medium à causa principali assumptum in ordine ad effectum, ad quod per se innatam non habet vim, & effectum. Hinc Scholastici definiunt, Creaturam posse assumi à Deo ut instrumentum morale, licèt non elevari, ut sit instrumentum Physicum creationis. Fidem in justificatione consideramus ut instrumentum, non Physicum, quasi effectum pari necessitate, ac agentia naturalia per conatas qualitates effectus suos producant, justificationem efficeret: sed morale, cujus tota vis dependet ex divina institutione: non aliter quam ænei serpentis aspectus valebat olim ad levamen & salutem Israelitarum.



rum. Licet interim fateamur dari passivam quandam aptitudinem (quam non dissentitur Adversarii esse rationem quare Deo visum est hanc Fœderis conditionem instituere) justitiæ Christi apprehendenda accommodam; quâ ex dignatione gratiosa utitur Deus ad talem finem. Perinde ac Verbum & Sacramenta sunt instrumenta, quæ quicquid habent efficacia debent institutioni divina. Per instrumentum igitur intelligimus medium applicationis, in cuius usu ex ordinatione divina participes facti sumus Christi, ejusque justitiæ; quod objectum fides justificans essentialiter connotat: Non quod fides sit conditio solutionis pretii, vel motivum voluntatis divina ut velit nostri misereri, quod præ se fert Remonstrantium doctrina de fide prævisa; neque quod fides ullâ organicâ causalitate justitiam Christi producat; sed quod oblatam in Fœdere Evangelico amplectitur.

Quintò, Distinguendum est instrumentum efficiendi ab instrumento recipiendi. Posteriori modo fidem esse instrumentum asserimus. Fidem agere in apprehensione Christi non negamus, & moralem efficientiam ei tribuimus, qualem patitur id genus instrumentorum natura; at justificat ratione passivæ receptionis. Agit mendicus dum manum extendit, at non eâ actione ditatur, sed in quantum recipit thesaurum vel potius thesauro quem recipit. Neque hinc colligitur hominem se justificare magis, quam agrotos Christi temporibus se sanare, quia credendi exerebant actus in ordine ad curationem: vel mendicum se ditare, quod ei qui eleemosynam erogat aptius tribuitur, & merito in ejus cedit laudes & honorem. Sic fide justificamur, sed non ex dignitate fidei, sed ex dignatione divina, cui de integro debetur tanti & tam gratuiti beneficii honos & gloria.

Sextò & ultimo, Fides consideratur vel in persona justificati, in radice est omnium virtutum in quantum operatur per charitatem, vel in effectu justificationis, sic janua est ad vitam æternam, vel in actu justificationis, & eo respectu dicimus esse instrumentum, non quatenus ad extra operatur, sed quatenus ad intra recipit Christum, in relatione ad quem tota vis fidei justificantis consistit.

Veritatem hoc modo explicatam quatuor firmabo argumentis, & perorabo.

Argumentum primum sumitur ex frequenti & usitatissimo loquendi modo in Scripturis, in quibus justificari dicimur *en m'isus*, ad Romanos, cap. 5. ver. 1. *En m'isus* Iesu Christi, cap. 3. ver. 22. (per fidem Jesu Christi, ut objecti videlicet formalis): *En m'isus* ex *en* causalitatem. iterum hic fidei mentio fit connotativè ad objectum, ut sæpius alibi: nunquam verò *En m'isus* quasi habitum aut actum fidei insinuat sub ratione conditionis; sed ut veram indiget causalitatem, non principalem, ergò instrumentalem: neque aliter sonant phrasæ antedictæ [en, *En*] qua semper notant instrumentum, cum ordinem dicunt ad effectum

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x

Ibid. ver. 25.

effectum causa principalis: nullibi autem legimus homines per amorem, aut poenitentiam justificari. Imò Scriptura terminis utitur exclusivis respectu omnium universaliter operum. *Xweis éργων*, ad Romanos cap. 4. ver. 6. *ὅτι ἐξ ἐργῶν*, ad Titum, cap. 3. ver. 5. *διὰ τῆς πίστεως, ὅτι ἐξ ἐργῶν*, ad Ephesios, cap. 2. vers. 8. *ὅτι ἐξ ἐργῶν ἢ ἢ μὴ διὰ τῆς πίστεως* *ἡμεῖς* *Χριστῷ* (ubi observandum iterum obiectum connotari) ad Galatas, cap. 2. ver. 16. è quibus singulis apertissimè constat, peculiarem aliquam causalitatem fidei competere in negotio justificationis.

Argumentum secundum sumitur à subordinatione fidei ad Deum, ut causam principalem justificationis. Formalis ratio instrumenti est subordinari & subservire cause principali in ordine ad effectum. At hoc fidei proprium esse disertè loquitur Scriptura. Arbitramur fide justificari hominem, ( sed à quo? Certè à Deo ) ad Romanos, cap. 3. vers. 28. Unde patet quàm nihili sit palmare illud argumentum, quo triumphum, sed ante victoriam, agunt Adversarii, [ Si fides fit instrumentum, tum vel Dei, vel hominis ]. Respondemus utriusque diverso respectu, Dei ordinativè, & ratione institutionis, tum efficienter, & collativè, in quantum Deus nobis fidem, & per fidem justitiam Christi confert, quâ justificamur. Neque hinc sequitur quod observat vir doctissimus, ut Deus credere dicatur, cùm credere sit actus immanens; proindeque Deum non aliter denominat, quàm effectus causam, non ut affectio subjectum. Hominis autem instrumentum est respectu receptionis, & applicationis quoad actum fidei exercitum; quæ omnia evidentissima & firmissima habent in Scripturis fundamenta. Deus unus est qui justificat circumcisionem ex fide, & præputium per fidem, ad Romanos, cap. 3. vers. 30. Ideoque Dei est instrumentum, quo utitur ut nobis conferat justificationem, fide sapius in Scriptura dicimur recipere Christum, ad Colossenses, cap. 2. ver. 6. Joannis, cap. 1. ver. 12. Ergò nostrum est instrumentum applicativum. Unde oritur

Tertium argumentum, quod desumitur à peculiari respectu quem fides dicit ad Christum, ejusque justitiam. Quicquid instrumentaliter recipit Christum instrumentaliter concurrat ad justificationem; at hoc fidei peculiare est. Unde Scriptura utitur vocibus *λαβόμενοι, παραλαβόμενοι*, quæ significant recipere illud quod ab alio offertur, & traditur: hinc oculo, pedibus, manui, brachiis, in sacro codice fides comparatur; quippe quâ videmus, recipimus, amplectimur Christum, eiq. innitimur ad justitiam, & remissionem peccatorum. Quorum fide facti sumus participes, remissionem peccatorum accipimus per fidem, Actorum, cap. 26. ver. 18. & etiam donum justitiæ, videlicet Christi, recipimus sine operibus, ad Romanos, cap. 5. vers. 17. Quæ ideo sapius *ἐν πίστει* *δικαιοσύνην*, ad Romanos, cap. 10. ver. 6. justitia fidei vocatur, hoc est, Christi fide apprehensa. *δικαιοσύνην* *Θεοῦ* *διὰ* *τῆς*



τῆς πίστεως, hoc est, recepta, ad Romanos, cap. 3. vers. 22. Nullibi scriptam legimus διὰ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἀγάπης, vel τῆς μετάνοιας, ergo phrasis illa peculiarem prae se fert emphasin. Fides unice innititur promissioni Evangelicae, quā promittitur & offertur, unice apprehendit, & applicat satisfactionem Christi, quā parata est justificatio & promerita, ideoque specialem habet in justificatione (semper intelligo passivam) influxum. Profecto nugae meras mihi videntur agere, quae fidem fatentur esse instrumentum receptivum Christi, sed non justificationis. (Ac si quis solem videre possit, non viso & recepto lumine.) Cum nos asserimus fidem justificare objective, in quantum recipit Christum, ejusque justitiam, (quae Christo ut Mediatori essentialis est) ad quem effectum peculiarem habet aptitudinem. Cognitio recipit solam speciem Christi ut objecti, amor tendit in Christum ob excellentiam personae, vel consideratione bonitatis, & gratia Christi; Fides cum apprehendit in quantum nostro loco mediatorem praestitit justitiam peccatis nostris adequatam, & respondentem, quam dum fides amplectitur Deus personam absolvit à reatu & pro justo habet.

Argumentum quartum & ultimum sumitur à remotione causarum instrumentalium, quas fidei loco suecenturiarunt Adversarii in negotio justificationis. Socinianorum dogma elevat meritum Christi. Bellarmini sententia dividit naturas in officiis mediatoris. Tridentinum dogma Sacramentorum supra quod par & aequum est evehit efficaciam, quae tamen externa & obsequantia instrumenta si quis dicit, non recuso.

Factus novum non justificat nisi aptitudinaliter, & remotè, ex suppositione conditionis praestitae fidei, videlicet, sine qua nemini efficax est ad justificationem. Quid? quid non agitur controversia de instrumento externo, & offerente, sed interno, & applicante, quale fidem esse asserimus. Quod in promptu esset fusiùs probare ex necessitate imputationis justitiae Christi activo-passivae, quam ratione acquisitionis asserimus esse causam meritoriam, respectu applicationis esse causam materiale justificationis nostrae. Unde justificamur, non solum quia Christus justus est, (ut calumniantur Adversarii) sed quia ejus justitia sit nostra gratiosa imputatione ex parte Dei, reali applicatione ex parte nostri, quam (dum opera adjungunt ut concausas) efficiunt *παραδόντες*, & assumuntur justitiae nostrae, quod certè Christo, ejusque omnimodè perfectà justitià indignissimum.

Possẽ etiam in causae subsidium eruditissimorum hominum suffragia accumulare ni tædio vobis essem, sufficiat impraesentiarum duorum Theologorum, quos merito pluris aestimant Adversarii, testimonia coronidis loco apponere.

Primum Bradthavi, Fide totâ, inquit, justificari dicimur, quia ea unice apprehendit, & applicat justitiam Christi imputatam:

*Alterum Reverendissimi Davenantii, determinatione tricesimâ octavâ. Fiduciâ in Christum Mediatorem tribuimus instrumentalem vim justificandi potius, quàm ulli actui hominis peccatoris; quia constat eo modo justificari homines, quo gloria divina maxime illustretur, & honor salutis nostrâ ad solum Deum referatur. At qui aliis virtutibus & operibus statuunt hominem justificari, gloriam salutis humanâ non integram Deo relinquunt, sed merito suo aliquâ parte adscribunt. Nos verò, uti totam gloriam elemosynâ promissâ & datâ non mendico accipienti, sed liberaliter eam donanti, adscribere solemus: Sic totam gloriam justificationis, & salutis humanâ, non fidei in Christum tendenti, & eum ad se attrahenti, sed Deo ipsi assignamus credentem gratuitò justificanti. Hac ille. Et hanc gloriam ut Deo nos etiam servemus illibatam, concludimus*

*Fidem justificare sub ratione instrumenti.*

**FINIS.**



THE  
LIGHT and DARKNESS  
OF  
NATURE,

Discovered  
In a Sermon at S. *Maries* in Cambridge  
on the Commencement-Sabbath,  
June 29. 1656.

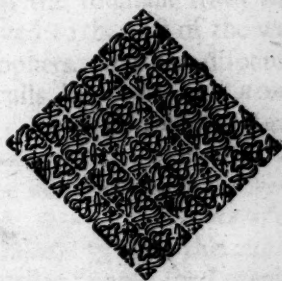
BY JOHN FROST, B. D.  
then Commencer.

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*Deus est quod vides, & quod non vides. Senec.*

*Deus ubique secretus est, ubique publicus, quem nulli licet ut est  
cognoscere, & quem nemo permittitur ignorare. Aug. ep. 44.*

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## ACTS 17. 23.

ΑΓΝΩΣΤΩ ΘΕΩ.

To the unknown God.



And what such an inscription upon an Altar at Athens, the eye of Greece, and that the eye of the world? and yet so blind, as not to discover the true worship of the true God? Had this Altar been erected in some ruder, more obscure part of Greece, it would have been just cause of wonder: for the Grecians were the most raised, and eminent of all the Gentiles, the most curious and inquisitive searchers into the secrets of all knowledge; which the Apostle takes notice of, *Σοφίαν ἑαλῶντες ἡρώδων, the Greeks seek after wisdom.* In which they were such exquisite proficient, that all other nations, even the *Romanes* themselves, in comparison of them, are in Scripture-phrase accounted but *Barbarians, I am a debtor*, saith the Apostle, *ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων*: which he seems to amplify, or explicate in the next words, *σοφοῖς καὶ ἀνοήτοις, to the wise, and to the unwise.* But that such an inscription should be found at Athens, a famous University, so named from it's dedication to *Minerva*, the Goddess of Learning, the fountain from which the streams of knowledge were derived to the rest of the world; the seat of the most eminent Philosophers, who here disputed with *Paul*, (which therefore *Tertullian* calls *linguatam civitatem*, in the same place stiling the *Athenians caupones sapientia & facundia*, the *ingrossers* and *monopolizers* of knowledge; whence as *Athenaus* calls *Rome* *ἐπιτομὴν τῆς οἰκουμένης* the *compendium of the world*, so the *Grecians* termed *Athens* *ἑλλάδα ἑλλάδος*, the *Greece of Greece*, and *μητέρα λόγων*, the *mother of reason*: yet that this Athens should be no less infamous for Idolatry then famous for Learning, must needs much heighten and enhance your admiration. Let the advocates of the power and improvements of nature produce their case, and bring forth their strong reasons (as the Prophet speaks) to evince a saving knowledge of God attainable by them: surely wee shall have the less reason to credit them, since we have the wisest, most raised and improved amongst the Gentiles *constitentes reos* in the Text by the inscription of their Altars *Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ, to the unknown God.*

Many such Altars there were erected at Athens, if you credit

K

Grotius.

1 Cor. 1. 22.

Rom. 1. 14.

Verf. 18.  
Lib. de Ani-  
ma cap. 3.  
Lib. 1. Dei-  
philosoph.

Isai. 41. 21.

Grot. in loc.

Vers. 24. 28.

A Lapide, Beza, Grotius.

Heins. in locum.

*Grotius.* Some of the Ancients, as *Oecumenius* and *Hierom* especially, conclude, that this was not the whole inscription, onely the Apostle makes use of so much of it, as might with advantage usher in his discourse of the worship of the true God, from verse the four and twentieth to the one and thirtieth. *Calvin* conceives that the inscription was not to any single Deity, but *Diis omnibus peregrinis*. *Heinsius* doubts not, but it was erected upon the account of some signall unexpected benefit received; as those which we read of in *Tacitus*, *inscribo adoptivum*, and *ultrimum*; whence the Apostle takes a futable argument, from the consideration of the benefits of God, as his making the world, and giving to all things life, motion, and being, to urge upon them the worship and service of the true God. Some think the Altar was erected upon the *Persians* invading *Greece*. Others say it was upon the *Athenians* deliverance from the pestilence, which they, having in vain attempted to remove by homage and service to their native Gods, at last consulting the oracle of *Apollo* receive a command to *lustrate* their city by sacrifice, but no God named, to whom they should perform it: *Epimenides*, then at *Athens*, counsels them to let the beasts for sacrifice loose, and where they stood still there to erect an Altar, *Deo ignoto & propitio*, To the unknown and propitious Deity: which being accordingly performed, the plague ceased. Others think it was set up out of superstitious fear: lest some Deity, whom they had omitted in their sacrifices should be incensed, and so plague them. I shall rather conclude this inscription to point at the true God: *neque enim ibi alius ignotus Deus prater verum*, saith the learned *Heinsius*. Else the words following the text would scarce be reconcilable to truth, *whom ye ignorantly worship preach I unto you*; intimating the inscription to have been to the true God. Though whatever the occasion of the erection of this Altar was, it is plain the Apostle had a fair opportunity offered him to discourse of the knowledge of the true God, of whom they betrayed most gross ignorance by this inscription, *Ἄγνωστο Θεῷ*, To the unknown God.

The text presents to your considerations, 1 the light, 2 the darkness of nature.

First, The light of nature; it is inscribed *Θεῷ*. Here is a God discovered and a worship acknowledged due to him by the erection of an Altar.

Secondly, The darkness of nature, it is *Ἄγνωστο*. These discoveries are but darke, and imperfect, the true God of the Jews was but an unknown uncertain God to the wisest of the Gentiles: as appears by that of *Lucan*.



— & dedita sacris

*Incerti Fudaa Dei.*

Hence two notes obviously arise,

1. Some discoveries of God may be made by the light of nature.
2. Natural light in it's most elevated and raised improvements, can make no full and saving discoveries of God.

By this introductory explication of the words you easily perceive what is the subject of my present discourse, which none I presume can rationally judge unreasonable or unsuitable either to the place I speak in, in an *Athens*, an *University* no less famous for *Learning* then that of old, and infinitely surpassing it for *Religion*: or the persons I am to speak to, men of eminent and raised improvements. If by the first of these I may quicken any stupid supine sluggard to a diligent industry in reviving and improving those principles, which God in nature hath implanted in him: and by the second knock off any proud wits from resting or vainly glorying in their acquired accomplishments, (which is the sin of most, and ruine of many Scholars) & perswade them, amidst their highest improvements & exquisiteness in *Arts* and *Sciences*, to look up to God for *higher*, *spiritual*, *supernatural* discoveries; I shall compass the greatest part of my designe in the choice of this subject at this time: which I shall endeavour in the *Application*, having first handled the points *Doctrinally*, which I shall now enter upon:

The *Socinian* (in this an enemy of *mans nature* as in the whole model of his doctrine he is of *Gods grace*) denies all natural, whether innate or acquired, knowledge of God.

The *Remonstrant* advanceth the light of nature too high, while he asserts the improvements of it to be sufficient to reach a *saving* discovery of God: either *immediately*, or (as those who speak with the greatest modesty assert) *mediatly* and *dispositively* (*ut disponantur homines ad predicationem Evangelii*, as the *Dori-Remonstrants* determine) as obliging God to the bestowing and disposing men to the receiving farther and *saving* discoveries from God. Each of these doctrines is suited, and fitted to comply with that model of *Divinity*, which these *Doctors* have broached and vented to the world.

The *Socinian* must not acknowledge man at first to have been created after the image of God in *righteousness* and *knowledge*, (which *Smalcus* therefore calls *Ida a quadam in cerebro nata*) lest he be necessitated to confess his *immortality* in that state, and so death to have come into the world as the punishment of sin: for then he must consequently confess the necessity of a *satisfaction* by *Christ* for that punishment, in order to *mans recovery*, to the completing

Contr.  
Frantz. disp. 3

of which this Divinitie must be acknowledged as necessarie, both which the Socinian blasphemously denies. Now, as consistent to all this, it is his interest to deny all natural knowledge of God, which we truly assert to be the reliques and remains of that Divine image, which God drew upon mans soul in his first creation.

The Remonstrants, in order to uphold the Doctrine of universal Redemption, must of necessitie assert an universal sufficiency of means allowed to all, and consequently to those who never heard of the Gospel; which their English Advocate knew well, and therefore roundly asserts, that *men may by the light of nature gather to the effect and substance of the Gospel*, and (page 11. of the Pagans debt and dowrie) that *the words of the heavens day and night, which they speak in the ears of all nations, are the words of eternal life, as well as those which our Saviour himself did speak*. Surely S. Peter was of another minde, who, when our Saviour seems to charge him with an intention of Apostasie, makes him this reply, *Lord, whither shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life*, but of this more anon. Thus you see while the Socinian would blow out the candle of the Lord, the Remonstrant indeavours to set it up instead of, or to usher in the Sun of righteousness.

John 6.68.

I shall speak briefly to the first of these, as introductorie to the second, which I chiefly intend.

Discoveries of God may be made by the light of nature two waies.

First, By those inbred and implanted notions, those *κοινὰ νοήματα*, which are the remains of the image of God in decayed nature; those principles which discovered themselves in the very Heathen: which are partly speculative, the first of which is that *there is a God*; partly practical, the first of which is, that *this God is to be worshipped*. This is the *νόμος φυσικός*, which the Apostle takes notice of in the very Heathens, which he elsewhere calls *ἡ ἀλήθεια*, which still remained impressed upon their hearts: the imprisoning which in *unrighteousness* left them *without excuse*, which it could not have done, had there been not remains of natural light to awaken and convince conscience to a self-condemnation. Had there not been some natural practical knowledge of good and evil, conscience could not accuse, but upon apprehensions of a Deitie, as the supreme judge of the violations of some law known to them. The justice of God in punishing sin, was one of those natural truths, which the light of nature discovered, which the Apostle calls *δικαιοσύνη τοῦ Θεοῦ*, known to the Heathens. The very Barbarians could conclude against Paul as a murderer, liable to the vengeance of God, when the viper hung upon his hand. By these common notions I mean

Rom. 2.15.

Rom. 1.18.

Rom. 1.32.

Acts 18.4.

not



not the *intelligent faculty*, nor yet the *species* of things impressed in the minde, as if all knowledge were nothing but *arabum*, which was *Plato's* opinion; nor yet any *Idea* which God hath formed of himself in the minde of man; but some habitual notions and principles, as the remains of that habit of knowledge, which was part of the image of God upon man in his first creation: which lie indeed as sparks under the embers till cherished and blown up by acts of reason, improving them unto actual knowledge. In respect of which *Aristotles Rasa tabula* may go for a truth. But the general consent of Nations, who had *sine doctrinā anticipationem quandam Deorum*, as *Tully* speaks, their wholesome laws for the worship of God, their industrious Idolatrie, that they would rather debase their nature to stocks and stones, to their stinking garden-Gods, then worship none, are pregnant arguments of apprehensions of a Deitie by the light of nature, which is the same in all men, *quoad prima principia & secundum rectitudinem, & secundum notitiam*, as *Aquinas* determines, as to the first principles both of knowledge and practise.

The *Socinian* thinks he sufficiently confutes all this by saying, That the Heathen had it *sola fama*, onely by report and tradition: but *Tully* tells us, they had it *duce natura*, and the Apostle *coram* by nature. The first principles of which may be born down, and obscured by Passion, custome in sin, Satans blinding mens minds; especially if to all these be added Gods giving men up *eis ratiōis sensum*, for the abuse of this natural light, as we read he dealt with those Heathens, *Rom. 1. 28.* but they can be no more wholly abolished then reason it self. I like the determination of *Alexis* in this point, who asserts the light and Law of nature to be *delibilis quoad effectum*, but *indelebilis quoad naturam*, which he fitly illustrates by the Eclipse of the Sun, in which the light is obscured, but not extinguished.

Men may arrive at that senselessness and stupiditie, as to live without actual apprehensions of God, *anymore*; but none can be without those principles which dictate, and, if improved, would lead them into some knowledge and discoveries of God. I call to witnes the secret lashes of those, who most endeavour to stifle and choak these natural principles, which God left in corrupted nature, for the upholding humane nature (for man without these would be equalized to beasts) and that by their light and improvement man may seek after, and arrive at some knowledge of God. *Zachar. 4. 10.* the Apostle tells us was the end of them: that which may be known of God is manifest in them, saith the Apostle, *Rom. 1. 19.* That's the first.

Lib. 1. de nat. Deor.

12. ad 2u. 94. ar. 4.

Rom. 2. 14.

Parte 3<sup>a</sup>. 2u. 27. membr. 3. ar. 1.

Ephes. 4. 19.

Rom. i. 20.

Lib. 2. Hist.  
nat. cap. 7.

Lib. 10. cap. 6.

Lib. 2. de nat.  
Deor.

Secondly, By the *contemplation* of the Creatures, and Providences of God. Natural reason by a *climax*, and gradation of causes and effects, may ascend to a discoverie of a *first being*; something of the nature of which is discoverable by Natural light, it being one received Maxime of Reason, that *What ever is in the effect is in the cause, either formally or eminently*, and therefore the light of nature may discover not onely the *existence*, but some of the glorious Attributes and Perfections of God. The Apostle mentions his Eternitie and Power, as knowable by the creatures of those who had not the Gospel. It is true, while the Heathens dazzled with the glorie of the creature, terminated their contemplation in them, the creatures proved occasions of their Idolatrie and Atheisme. Pliny, that great searcher into Nature, denies a Deitie: and Galen hath nothing (as some observe) by which in charitie he can be excused from Atheisme, but one single hymn in a good mood composed *Creatori*. Yet the creatures in themselves are as so many mirrors, in which is discoverable the glorie of the Creator, which the Psalmist tell us, *Psal. 19. 1. the heavens declare*, namely *objectively*, as giving man just occasion to celebrate the glorie of the Majesty, Power, Wisdome, and Goodness of the Creator. From whose creating all things, the Apostle argues the Gentiles into an acknowledgement of a worship due to God. *We preach unto you, that ye should turn from your vanities unto the living God, who made heaven and earth.* I finde Augustine in his Confessions, thus bespeaking God, *Cælum, (saith he) & terra, & omnia quæ in iis sunt, undique mihi dicunt, ut te amem, nec cessant dicere omnibus, ut sint inexcusabiles.* Job send us (*chap. 12. 7, 8, 9. verses*) to the creatures to learn God. Can a man see a fair exquisite picture, and not admire the Artificer? *ex pede Herculem*, Natural light may trace God by those foot-steps he hath left of himself in every creature. So from the management and ordering of affairs in the world, reason discovers the Power and Wisdome of God. Tully concludes that nothing is so manifest, when men contemplate the heavenly bodies, as that there is *aliquod numen præstantissima mentis, quod hæc regantur*, some admirable wisdome to manage them: and the Apostle tels us, *Acts 14. 17. God left not himself, ἀπαρρητορ, even amongst the Heathens*, which he proves by Gods giving them rain and fruitfull seasons, the issues of his providence, though they had not the Gospel-testimonie of God.

It is true, the belief of a God was sometimes weakned and shaken by observing the seeming inequality of providential dispensations to good and bad. *Cur bonis mala, & bona malis*, was a question which puzzled them, which Seneca hath (I had almost said, divinely) resolved:



resolved: and no wonder when Scripture tells us of *Job, David, Jeremiah*, the Saints of God were at a loss and stand upon the consideration of the providence of God in this particular: but these did but retard not overturn their acknowledgements of a God, of whom there are such visible discoveries in the least creature (for God is *maximus in minimis*) that *Augustin* professeth he doubted more sometimes whether he had a soul, the effects of which he daily experienced, then, *utrum in hac rerum universalitate sit Deus, whether there were a God ruling the world.*

Soliloq. cap. 31.

It is true, what ever may be known by the creature is in more legible characters in Scripture: whence the Apostle saith, that by faith we believe that the worlds were framed. The creation of the world is a truth discoverable by natural light, though the wisest Philosophers erred much in the manner of it, which *Moses* hath exactly described. The *Platonists*, as *Augustin* tells us, asserted the bodies of men to be produced by their *minor Deities*, though their souls were created by God. The same truth may be the object of science, as made out by rational demonstration; and of faith, as built upon the authority of God in Gospel-revelation: whence God falls under the object both of *Metaphysics* and *Divinity*. O *Shadrach*, saith the Apostle, speaking of those who were destitute of Gospel-light. God hath manifested something of himselfe to them namely by that common light by which he enlighteneth every one, who comes into the world: to wit, by the light of nature, which improved may bring us to many, though no saving discoveries of God. And that brings me to the second Truth contained in the Text: though it bee *Dei*, yet it is *hominis*, whence ariseth the second assertion.

Heb. 11. 3.

Lib. 12. de Civit. Dei. cap. 26.

Rom. 1. 19.

Joh. 1. 9.

That natural light in its most elevated and raised improvements can make no full and saving discoveries of God.

Doctrine.

In the handling which point I shall not dare so far to intrude into the Arke of Gods secrets, as to enquire or determine what extraordinary way God may take to manifest himself savingly to those, who had only the guidance of natural light. Secret things belong to God, revealed things belong to us: but if God did use such, as for my part I will not limit the holy one of Israel, I assert,

Deut. 29. 29.

- First, It was not as the issue of natural improvements; nor
- Secondly, A fulfilling any promise revealed in the Word; nor
- Thirdly, Any retribution by way of distributive justice; nor
- Fourthly, Any answering a just claim could be made to farther communications: for

First, Suppose a man to have improved natural light to the utmost height, and this is but *suppositio per impossibile*;

Secondly, Suppose him to have attained all moral virtues in *gradu Heroico*;

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Suppose him moſt *induſtrious* and *quick-ſighted* in the ſtudy of the *creatures* and the *providences* of God: yet I aſſert that all this cannot reach to any *ſaving* diſcoveries of God, upon this five-fold ground.

In locum.

1. Becauſe *natural light* can reach no diſcoveries of Chriſt, whom *Chryſoſtome* thinks to be here meant by the *unknown God*, *τις ὃν ἡμεῖς ἀγνοούμεθα ἀλλὰ ὁ Χριστός*. The *Athenians* were wont to worſhip the Gods of all nations, whence the Apoſtle juſtly chargeth them of overmuch ſuperſtition, *verſe. 22.* and, becauſe they knew not Chriſt whom the Chriſtians worſhipped, they erected this Altar to him under the notion of *Θεὸς ἀγνώſτος*: however this may be but a conjecture, certain it is that the *utmoſt light* of nature improved cannot diſcover Chriſt. You know the old charge, which *Auguſtine* lays againſt *Tullie's* works, that he could not finde the name *Jeſus* in them. *Plato* ſeems to bid the faireſt for ſuch a diſcovery, when he ſaith *κείνῳ ἐπέξε λόγος*, which ſounds like that Scripture, *Joh. 1. 3.* *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*: but the learned *Cauſabon* well notes that *Plato's* λόγος differs vaſtly from *S. John's* λόγος, that being only the ſupream *reaſon* and *wiſdome* uſed in the creation, which *natural light* might diſcover from the creatures; the other the eternal ſubſiſting word made known only by the Scriptures. There is a natural connexion between God and the creature, as between the *cauſe* and the *effect*, ſo one may be a due *medium* of diſcovering the other; but there is no connexion imaginable between the creature and a Redeemer: ſome indeed lead us a tedious circuit here, and tell us that *natural light* diſcovering God to be juſt, and yet obſerving his *patience*, might from thence gather a ſatiſſaction made by a *Mediatour*; but I preſume you eaſily diſcerne a *non ſequitur* in this Argument: for the *patience* of God argues at the greateſt advantage but a *reprieve*, not a *pardon*. For it is oft exerciſed towards the *vessels* of *wrath* as the Apoſtle tells us: or if it might argue the *mercy* of a *Creator*, it could not rationally conclude a *purchase* made by a *Redeemer*, for the diſcovery of whom *natural light* was never intended, which ſhould have been moſt perfect, had man perſiſted in *innocency*, yet the diſcovery of a Saviour would then have been as *unnecessary* as it is now impoſſible by the *light* of nature, which remained in *Adam* after his fall, who yet never dreamt of a Saviour, but lay under fears and terrours of an offended juſtice, till God revealed to him the promiſe of the *ſeed* of the woman.

Exercitat.  
lib. 1.

Rom. 9. 22.

Gen. 3. 15.

But ſuppoſe *natural light* could reach the knowledge of a *Mediatour*, yet not of Chriſt as the perſon, which yet is indiſpenſably neceſſary, if Scripture may be admitted *umpire*; *This is life eternal,*

&amp;c.



&c. Joh. 17. 3. And, There is no name else given under heaven where-  
by we must be saved: without whom whosoever dare promise any sal-  
vation, S. Augustin doubts whether that man shall be saved by Christ.  
& yet some dare entail it upon every Religion, which is the ground  
of mere Scepticisme and equalizeth Turkey and India with England.  
The Apostle describes those who had onely the light of nature,  
therefore to be without hope, because without Christ. The Magi,  
though Astrologers, yet needed the guidance of an extraordinary  
Star to lead them unto Christ: of whom when Peter had made  
that eminent confession, our Saviour tells him that flesh and blood  
had not revealed it unto him, but his Father. Matt. 16. 16, 17.  
This Sun of righteousness, as that in the firmament, is only discovered  
by its own light.

Secondly, Because natural light cannot discover the means of  
salvation, as justification, regeneration, faith, repentance: which are  
matters onely of Gospel-revelation, if the Scripture may be heard  
to speak. The Apostle gives this as the reason of his high valuation  
of the Gospel, because it onely was the power of God unto salu-  
tion, and he concludes expressly that there is no ordinary way of faith  
but by hearing. How shall they believe on him of whom they have not  
heard? yes, saith the Remonstrant so they might by the preaching  
of the creatures, Sun, Moon and Stars: for vers. 18. it is sayd, Have  
they not heard? yes, their sound is gone out into all the earth, which by  
the Psalmist is spoken of the creatures manifesting God. True,  
the Apostle useth that Scripture by way of accommodation, to  
note the intent of Gospel-preaching, not thereby to licence the  
creatures as preachers of it: but to note the extent and success of the  
Apostles preaching in the world, ο παντες αυτοι, not of the creatu-  
res but of the Apostles, and those whose feet bring the glad tidings of  
peace, vers. 15. Natural light can never discover faith in Christ as  
the means of salvation: those who would tie that faith mentioned  
by the Apostle, he that will come to God must believe that God is, and  
that he is a rewarder, &c. to a faith in God onely as creatour should in  
my opinion do wel to consider, that God since the fall is a reward-  
er to none but through Christ as Mediatour, who therefore must  
consequently be included in the object of that faith by which we  
please God. So repentance is not discoverable by the light of natu-  
re, it was a riddle to the Apostles themselves that repentance unto  
life should be given to the Gentiles.

So the righteousness of justification is indiscernable by natures  
light, it is in the Gospel onely that the righteousness of God is revealed  
from faith to faith: yet the discovery of all these is necessary to sal-  
vation. He that believes shall be saved. Except ye repent, ye shall pe-  
rish,

Acts. 4. 12.  
Serm. 14. de  
verbo Dom.  
or. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.

Ephes. 2. 12.  
Matt. 2.

or. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.

Rom. 1. 16,  
17.  
Rom. 10. 14.

Psal. 19.

Heb. 11. 6.

Acts 11. 18.

Rom. 1. 17.

Mark 16. 16.

Ephes. 3. 10.

Verse 32.

In locum.  
In locum.

rish, Luke 31. 3. These are those mysteries into which the Angels desire *Exhibere* to stoop that they may pry into: and is the light of nature more prying then the Angelical understanding? By the Church is made known to the Angels the mysteries of salvation: and can the Heathens read them in the stars? I think *Cheremittus* was not too severe in his charge, when he calls such assertions, *non humana, sed diabolica ludibria fidei justificantis, & verbi divinis patefacti*.

Thirdly, because the light of nature cannot discover the true worship of God: *Agnoſcere deum* as *S. Paul* chargeth these sublimated *Athenians*. The light of nature led them not to a true object of their worship: the Apostle saith, *Gal. 4. 8.* they did worship to them who were no gods; nay, to devils, and not to God. But suppose the right object of worship, yet the due manner is not discoverable by natural light, but onely to be learned from the word of God. *S. Paul* lays it to the charge of the Gentiles, *Rom. 1. 25.* that they worshipped the creature more then the Creatour; besides, as *Mr. Mede* saith, it should be rendered: but if they did worship the onely true God, as *Augustin* thinks, and *Lipsius* contends on the behalf of his *Sticks*; yet in such a manner as God could not accept. *Tertullian* is expreſs. *Ed irreligioſior Ethnicus, quò paratior: the more zealous, the more superſtitious.* The Samaritan-worship was no leſs magnificent and pompous, then that at *Jerusalem*, yet being not ſuitable to the word of God, our Saviour rejects it, *John 4. 22.* *Ye worship ye know not what: But ſalvation is of the Jews.* Why? becauſe they had the true worship according to the word of God, which natural light cannot diſcover. Nay, nothing hath more prejudiced Spiritual, Goſpel-worship, then meaſuring it by mans reaſon, which hath alwaies begat pompous, ſuperſtitious outſides in worship, the eaſineſs and ſplendour of which hath made them gratefull to corrupt nature.

Fourthly, From the neceſſitie of divine ſupernatural revelation; in order to ſaving diſcoveries of God: the Apoſtle ſpeaks expreſſly, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* that the natural man perceives not the things of God; neither indeed can he, *animus luxuriosus, the ſouly man*, elevated by the higheſt improvements of reaſon and underſtanding, if deſtitute of the Spirit, cannot reach the things of God. That this is the proper importance of the word *Ignis*, appears from the Apoſtle *Jude*, verſe 19. *Ignis mundi uti exiſtes.* Any man, ſolis nature facultatibus pradius, ſaith *Calvin*; qui humana tantum rationis luce ducitur, ſaith *Grotius*, who hath no other guidance then the light of nature, is he, to whom *S. Paul* denies a poſſibilitie of any ſaving diſcoveries of the things of God. The outward ſhinings of the Goſpel



Gospel can bring us to no saving knowledge, unless the Spirit withall shine into the heart to give *the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ*; much less can the dim light of nature: if thousands remain blinde under the full beamings and sun-shine of the Gospel, no wonder they should be in the dark who have onely the candle-light of reason.

2 Cor. 4. 6.

These enlightnings of the Spirit will appear necessarie, if we consider,

1. *Mans corrupted condition*, in which he wants not onely light, but eyes; and these the Spirit must communicate; the outward discoveries of the Gospel are ineffectual to it without the Spirit, though Christ himself, *the Sun of righteousness*, displayed many beams of glorious light in his miracles and doctrine, speaking *as never man spake*, still the Pharisees remained in the dark; our Saviour gives you one account of it, Matt. 13. 11. *Unto you is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to them it is not given*, much less can the most vigorous ray of natural light effect this. Could it discover the object, it cannot renew and change the faculty, nor open the blinde eyes, which alone is the work of the Spirit, which therefore S. Paul prays for on the behalf of his Ephesians, Ephes. 1. 17. that God would give them the spirit of revelation to the knowledge of himself, that the eyes of their understanding being enlightned, they might know what was the hope of his calling, and so on. No man hath seen the Father at any time but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

John 1. 18.

2. *The manner of these discoveries*, which is spiritual, which the Apostle gives as the reason why the natural man perceives them not, *οὐκ ὁμαλῶς ἀνακρίνεται*. Every object is discovered by a suitable light, therefore the light of reason can no more reach the mysteries of the Gospel, then the light of sense can the objects of reason. The Author of the *Ἀπολύτωση* in my opinion strengthens this argument, while he endeavours to elude it, for he would have the *Πυρρὸς* to be *ὡς ἐν Χριστῷ*, the babe in Christ: for certainly if he, who hath some measure of spiritual discerning by divine illumination (as the least Saint hath) cannot reach such discoveries, they who are wholly destitute of the illumination of the Spirit cannot attain to them.

Fifthly, From the Scripture description of those, who had onely the guidance of natural light, described to be *without Christ, without hope, without God*, Ephes. 2. 12. *Alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance and blindness of their minds*, Ephes. 4. 18. *Not to know God*, 1 Thes. 4. 5. *to be darkness in the abstract*, Ephes. 5. 8. And but to grope after God, Acts 17. 27. *ὡς ἡ ἀλασφονία*, as the Egyptians

1 Cor. I. 23.

Verse 18.

Verse 19.

*ptians* under their *thick darknes*, or the *Sodomites* when struck with blindness: & farther characterized as those who had a *disrelish* of the Gospel, which was to them but *foolishness*. Nay, the most improved of them were the greatest opposers of the Gospel; you have here not only the lesser voluptuous *Epicureans*, but more strict, refined, elevated and severe *Stoicks*, one of whose principles was to *love virtue for virtues sake*, opposing S. Paul, and esteeming him but a *babler*, and a *setter forth of strange gods*, while he preached Christ. *Chrysostome* thinks their bringing him to *Areopagus* was to punish him, as they had done *Socrates* to death by two hundred eightie one suffrages, for *innovating in religion*, such an undream't of thing was a Jesus amongst the wisest Philosophers even at *Athens*, who set up their Philosophical principles in opposition to the Gospel: upon which account the Apostle warns his *Colossians*, to *beware lest they be spoiled by Philosophy*, Colos. 2. 8. Not that the Apostle decries all use of Philosophy (as some in our daies, it is hard to say whether with more ignorance or impudence, do) but only so far as it is *vain*, and *unprofitable*, and surely all is not such, unless it be in vain to be rational, that is to say, to be men; for Philosophy is nothing but the genuine birth of right reason: and *res Del ratio*, saith *Tertullian* (the candle of the Lord, saith *Solomon*) who yet decries Philosophers, as *Heresiarcharum Patriarchas*; so far as corrupted; but the errors of Philosophy do no more argue the uselessness of Philosophy, then the errors of Divines evacuate the studie of Divinitie. These belong to Philosophy no otherwise then wens or boyls to the bodie, which being cut off, or cured, the bodie remains useful and necessarie. Philosophy is not opposite, but assistant to Divinitie (and while *Hagar* will wait upon *Sarah*, no reason why she should be thrown out of doors) though Philosophers have oft been the greatest enemies, and opposers of it. To summe up all, if those who had onely the light of nature be thus in the dark, if neither Christ, nor the means of salvation, nor the true worship of God were discoverable by it, it's sufficiency to any saving discoveries, may, I hope, from the premises be rationally concluded.

But the *Remonstrants* have one salve for all this, which is that the (*facienti quod in se est*) improvements of the light of nature, though they be not immediately sufficient to salvation, yet do dispose to the receptions of farther communications of grace, and saving discoveries of God: so the *Dark-Remonstrants* determine. Truth is, they have so many subterfuges in making out a sufficiency of means to those who had onely the light of nature, that we may say of them, what the Historian observes of some of the enemies of the



the *Romanes*, *Major aliquando labor est invenire quam vincere*. Give me leave a little to trace those footsteps I observe they have left behind them in their writings, as to that universally pleaded, *facienti quod in se est*. I say,

First, Who ever improved natural light and abilities to the utmost? If the *Remonstrants* please (though I think it will not quit charges) to send out a *hue and cry* after such, I am confident the return will be a *non est inventus*, nor could they, though oft solicited to it, bring one instance of any who have by natural improvements arrived at faith: could any have been produced, we should have heard of it with both ears long before this time. *Arminius* sure was sensible of this, That none ever improved nature to the height, therefore in his writings against *Perkins* flees to a *minus male*, those who improve somewhat better a natural light than others. But then I demand,

1. What degree of improvement shall dispose for farther grace and,
2. Whether all, except some few of the most profligate and vicious, be not upon this account disposed for saving grace? especially if we stand to the verdict of the *Dort-Remonstrants*, who determine all to be disposed, *qui omnem rationis usum non excusserunt*, and then few, if any, are excluded.

Secondly, How this assertion differs from the *Papish merit ex congruo*, I shall leave it to you to judge, and to them to make out. I am sure both are equally contradictorie to the Apostle, *2 Tim. 1. 9. Who hath called us not according to works, but according to his own purpose, and grace*: but if upon improvements of nature, it certainly is of works.

Thirdly, Doth not this Doctrine friendly shake hands with old *Pelagianisme*, in making grace and nature of the same latitude and extent? *Mutant vocem propter horrorem hominum Heretici evitandum, ut sic eandem pravitatis sententiam Sophistici palliant et introducunt: sicque corda simplicium facilius corrumpunt*, they are the censure of the profound *Bradwardine* in this very particular: they gild the pill to make it more grateful to the vulgar, and while they hugge the *Heresie*, they would not be branded for *Hereticks*. To make any *antecedaneous* works of ours but the *causa sine qua non* of grace, is the highest that ever *Pelagius* went, if you credit the same profound Author.

Fourthly, God is no way obliged to make farther discoveries of himself upon the improvements of nature:

1. The improvements themselves cannot oblige God, as being not acceptable to him, the highest moralities of the Heathens, be-

ing but *corrupt fruit* of a *corrupt tree*, Matt. 7. 18. and being not the actions of *persons in Christ*, nor *issuing from faith*, without which it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11. 6. cannot bring any obligation upon God.

2. God hath not engaged himself by promise, to make such additions of *grace* upon the improvements of nature : for

1 Cor. 6. 10.

Matt. 11. 22.

1. Then God should oft be false to his promise, it being evident that he hath oft bestowed his Gospel and grace upon those, who have least improved their naturals, as upon the *Corinthians*, who were the grossest of sinners; *Tyre* and *Sidon* were better then *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, yet the Gospel was denied to those, given to these.

Matt. 25. 29.

Matt. 25. 14.  
Ephes. 4. 8, 11

2. There is no such promise upon record in the word of God; if there be, we demand the Text, and it is at hand, *Habenti dabitur*. A very great encouragement for you indeed ( *My Fathers, and Brethren of the Ministry* ) to be diligent in improving your talents of Ministerial gifts and abilities: for these are meant in the Parable, the talents were given when the Master went into a far country. Christ when he ascended gave these gifts, *Pastors, Apostles*, and the rest. Ministerial gifts are like the *widows oyle*, which increased by being poured out; whereas wrapping these talents in a napkin, by a careless negligence or remissness, endangers the loss both of our talents, and of our souls, *Take from him the talent*, vers. 28. *Cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness*, vers. 30. but here is not the least assurance, or promise given of *grace* upon the improvements of nature. The improvement was in the same kinde, and so the good use of naturals may be recompensed with a superaddition of greater natural abilities: as God crowns the improvements of *grace* with farther degrees of *grace*. Besides the immediate result of the good improvements of these talents, was *glorie*, *Enter into the joy of thy Lord*, which the *Remonstrants* themselves will not have to be the reward of a good use of nature, but onely a collation of *saving grace*.

Verse 23.

God therefore is free from all obligation, either by *mans merit*, or his own promise. Yea, but God will do it, *sine aliqua obligatione, ex mera liberalitate*, saith *Corvinus* oft in several places of his writings against *Moulin*; but we may justly wonder how *Corvinus* came to be of Gods secret council, that he can determine what God will do, where there is no promise declaring that will; or what assurance can be given to any of *grace* upon the improvements of nature: where there is no promise to engage God, or found any well-grounded expectation. And what less then the height of impudence is it for the creature to fix laws to the Creator,



tour, and prescribe methods to God, which he hath not fixed in his word; but this method is laid *ipfa equitate Dei naturali*, saith *Corvinus*, upon the equitie of Gods nature, which obligeth him to it. But is it not as rash pride and presumption, to determine of Gods justice, otherwise then God hath done in Scripture? no, but God saith, *What could I have done more for my vineyard?* *Esay 5. 4.* but what? because God gives a sufficiencie of outward means to his Church, shall his equitie therefore oblige him to give sufficiencie of inward grace, to those who are without the Church? I leave you to judge of this *Logick*; and shall conclude this point with that excellent determination of *Alvarez*, *Nulla lex fuit unquam statuta de dandis auxiliis gratia facientibus totum quod in se est, ex facultate naturae, neque Christus morte suā meruit, aut merere voluit talem legem*: God never made, and Christ never did, or would merit such a law, which should oblige God to the conferring of grace upon the improvements of nature.

Fifthly, Are not the Remonstrants in this Doctrine direct Antipodes to Scripture? which every where resolves all saving discoveries and communications from God, into his discriminating will, not mans previous improvements. *Cuius conferat, prateritis aliis, pendet ex misericordia & libertate Divina*, our Divines solidly determined at *Dort*: *In istis rebus evidens*, saith Christ, blessing his Father for communicating himself to those who were least disposed. *Matt. 11. 25.* *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight: God will if you will*, say the Remonstrants: *I will because I will*, saith God, *Rom. 9. 15.* *If you improve, God cannot be wanting to you*, say the Arminians: *It is not of him that willet, nor of him that runneth*, saith the Scripture, *verse 16.* But after all this there is one shift more, *Deus paratus est dare fidem omnibus, quantum in se est*; why then certainly omnipotent grace can effect it: *cetero ordine*, saith *Corvinus*, which neither *Corvinus*, nor any man else can discover. Nay, he never denies special grace, *nisi spectata vocationis respectu*, say the *Dort-Remonstrants*, unless the common call be refused: wo were to the best of us, did Gods grace depend upon such a condition, for who doth not refuse common calls? nay, without special grace we cannot but refuse them. *Nemo bene uti potest libera arbitrio, nisi per gratiam*, is *Augustins* Divinitie, and our Saviours doctrine too, *John 6. 44.* *No man can come to me except the Father draw him.* True, but God gives an universal assisting grace to all in order to the good improvement of natural light: this is the plea, which their great English Advocate makes for them. But (Brethren) this is a *Chymara*, and a dream, which the Scripture gives us no ground to believe: nay, that tells you that God suffered those

Ad. 1. Thef. 2.

Acts 14. 16.

those who had onely the *light of nature*, the Gentiles, *to walk in their own ways*, that is to say, *extra suam gratiam degere*, if *Prospers* gloss may be admitted, *to live without the necessary supplies of his grace*. Besides, it would be resolved, whether this assisting grace be effectual or no: if so, then all must be in a capacity for *saving* grace: if effectual, or ineffectual, according to the compliance of mans will, then all is still resolved into *nature*, nothing given to *grace*, which is the height of *Pelagianisme*. *Sed quorsum hac perditio?* may some say, *To what purpose is all this waste of time and words?* I shall hope to evidence it no labour in vain, by discovering the practical importance of this truth in the *Application*, which I shall with all possible brevity dispatch.

## Application.

Acts 16. 6.

Matt. 10. 5.

First, This may help us to discover the sandy foundation on which the Doctrine of *universal redemption*, and consequently the whole fabrick of *Arminianisme*, stands. For, if this pillar be pulled down, the whole building falls about their ears, which makes them so industriously voluminous in asserting this doctrine above all the rest. Or if the purchase be particular, then the purpose of God, the execution of which that purchase makes way for, must be particular; the necessary consequents of which must be the certain efficacy of *grace* and *perseverance of Saints*, because Gods purposes cannot be frustrated. Now this Doctrine of *universal redemption* cannot be upheld without the designation of sufficient meanes afforded to all men, which to those who never heard of the Gospel can be nothing else but the improvements of nature: God not affording, nay (that I may prevent that common cavill *Deus paratus est*) resolving not to afford, the Gospel to many of them. *Paul* was expressly forbidden by the holy Ghost to preach the word in *Asia*: and the Apostles at first commanded not to goe into the way of the Gentiles. Well but though they had not the Gospel, yet *non defuerunt media quadam communiora*, saith *Corvinus*: but what other those should be besides the light and improvements of nature is not imaginable, the insufficiency of which to salvation hath, I hope, been in some measure evinced by the former part of this discourse.

Secondly, Hence be perswaded to set your selves in opposition to this doctrine, in doing which you appear for the honour of Gods grace and Gospel. *Bradwardine* justly entitled his book *de causa Dei*, when he wrote against the *Pelagians*: whoever peruseth it seriously will finde it a most soveraigne Antidote against the poyson of *Arminianisme*, against which in this point it is Gods and your interest to appear.

First,



First, As you are *ministers of the Gospel*. The Doctrine of the sufficiency of the light of *nature* vilifies and debaseth your office: for what need the Commission of Christ to his Apostles and their Successors to teach all nations, if God had before commissioned and empowered Sun, Moon, and Stars to do it? or what need the Stars in the *right hand* of Christ, if those in the *firmament* have light enough to lead us to him? Nay doth not this argue you the greatest impostours, while you impose *hearing, reading, prayer, conference, meditation, grappling with the difficulties of Scripture* upon the people in order to the knowledge of God and Christ: which an *Indian* or *American* can arrive at by the contemplation of the creatures and providences of God?

Matth. 28.  
19.

Secondly, As you are *Scholars*. This Doctrine, I apprehend, makes *Universities* and *Commencements* useless: no need sure of the *Schools of the Prophets*; you may go without any expences to school to the creatures. What need youth hazard their eyes in studying the *apices* and *points* of the *Greek* and *Hebrew* Text, for the understanding of the *New* and *Old Testament*, (in the latter of which some of *natures* Advocates tell us, there is not a word to be found of faith in Christ) which the Gentiles can arrive at by the improvement of Nature, and read written in the legible characters of the heavenly bodies?

Thirdly, As you are *Christians* especially: for this Doctrine,

I. *Robs you of your priviledges in the enjoyment of the Gospel and means of grace*. Surely, the Apostle was out when he put a *priviledge* to this as the greatest priviledge of the Jews, that *to them were committed the Oracles of God*: and our Saviour mistook, when he said, *Salvation was of the Jews*. Why it seems by this Doctrine the Gentiles were every whit as near it, whom yet the Apostle describes to be *without hope*. And surely we Christians do but flatter our selves in a *fools-paradise*, while we imagine our selves so highly advanced in our priviledges above the *Indian* or *American*, who by this Doctrine can oblige God to give them that grace, which we profess no claim to after our utmost improvements of the Gospel; but say as our Saviour hath taught us, *We are unprofitable servants*. What great priviledge is it to enjoy Ordinances, if the creatures, and providences of God, can bring any to a *saving* discovery of him? Or what great advantage to be planted within the *pale* of the Church, the *inclosed garden* of God, if the dew of grace fall as plentifully upon the *wilderness* of the world? Or what need their being *added unto the Church who should be saved*; if they might as well have attained it out of the Church? Certainly (*Brethren*) God cannot but be highly provoked by such undervaluing these high Gospel-priviledges.

Rom. 3. 2.

Joh. 4. 22.

Ephes. 2. 12.

Luc. 17. 10.

Acts 2. 47.

*American*

2. It voids the exercise of Christian duties; it destroys a Christians gratitude and thankfulness. It is in event to tell God that he was at an unnecessary expence, when he gave us the Gospel; and it must needs dull and take off the edge of our devotions for the Heathen, and quench all zeal, and cut the sinews of all endeavours for bringing them over to the embracing of the Gospel; and tells us we are guilty of a foolish ignorant commiseration when we pity them. Nay, they might rather (were this Doctrine true) pity us, who go about a circuit for that knowledge, which they have a more compendious way to.

Thirdly, Then no reason so highly to admire (as some do) the moralities and improvements of the Heathens, which as glow-worms might have some glimmering lustre in the night of ignorance; but now the Sun of Righteousness is arisen, they appear to be but of an earthly extraction. *Putantur esse virtutes, in quibus regnat superbia & quaedam sibi placendi altitudo ruinosa*, saith Augustine. A vein of pride and vain-glory run through all their moralities, which besides in the best of them were checkquered with some grosser sins.

Fourthly, Let us with thankfulness advance the mercy of God, in making known himself to us by Gospel-discoveries, he was but *Θεός & γινώσκω* to the best of the Heathen: but in *Judah* is God known. Blessed be his name, we can say, in England is God known. *Raritas ipsa pretium augeat*, saith Calvin. God hath not dealt thus with every nation. The Psalmist might well close up with a, Praise ye the Lord, &c. Let us commiserate and pray for those who sit in darkness, let us in *Goshen* pity Egypt: but let's not advance nature in them to the disparagement of the grace and Gospel of God amongst our selves: lest while we would seem charitable, we prove unthankfull, and by magnifying the light of nature, we disparage the light of the Gospel, and rob God of his freeness, and specialty of his grace. Holy Bernard, complaining to Pope Innocent of *Abelardus* (Professour at Paris, who it seems amongst many other errors, had broached this, which I have been discoursing of,) censures him thus, *Dum multum sudat quomodo Platonem faciat Christianum, se probat Ethnicum*; While he would make Plato a Christian, he proves himself a Heathen. And certainly those, who so highly advance natural light, can have but low, mean, and very undervaluing thoughts of the Gospel.

Fifthly, Improve Gospel-discoveries of God, by walking answerably to such revelation, let your conversations be such as become the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let's blush that moralities in a Heathen should out-shine Christianitie in us. We know more, let's not practise less. Let's not, as *Salvian* speaks of some, *Gentes agere sub nomine Christiano*; but let every one, who names the name of Christ, depart

Lib. 21. de  
Civit. Dei,  
cap. 16.

Psal. 76. 1.

In 1 Cor.  
2. 14.  
Psal. 147.  
20.

Phil. 1. 27.

2 Tim. 2.  
19.

Plato no Christian



depart from iniquity: otherwise our knowledge of God will but increase our stripes. Though the utmost improvements of nature cannot save the Heathens, (excuse them they will in part, *Fabritius* shall fare better then *Catiline*) yet the abuse of it condemned them: they perish without the law, Rom. 2. 12. And if this left them without excuse, that they held natural truth in unrighteousness, and when they knew God, glorified him not as God, as the Apostle saith it did; how much more inexcusable shall the abuse of Gospel-light, and imprisoning it by sin, leave Christians? *Solons*, *Socrates*, *Scipios*, *Catoes* will appear in judgment against many pretended Christians: It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon. When God comes to administer justice upon the ungodly: it will be *ἡ πόλις Ἰερουσαλὴμ*. Darkness seems never so dismal as to those, who go immediately from the light: the darkness of hel will be sadder to none, then to those, who fall into it from under the light of the Gospel. The Pagans plea of ignorance will not excuse him, because voluntarily contracted, and wilfully lived in; but a Christians improved knowledge will much more condemn him.

Luke 12. 47.

Rom. 1. 18, 21.

Math. 10. 17  
Rom. 2. 9.

Sixthly, Then let's not pride our selves in our natural improvements, in our parts and endowments. We are here in a place of improvement, and let us improve to the height (for questionless we must be accountable to God for our talents of natural abilities, depth of judgment, acuteness of wit, strength of memory, quickness of apprehension, which I wish they did really believe, or seriously consider, who abuse these to the reproach of Religion, and opposing the truths of God): but let's not rest in these, as in themselves setting us a whit the nearer to the saving grace of God. Nay, if not sanctified, and joyned with humility, they may set us at a greater distance from God, and heaven. Great parts and gifts are not just matter of pride and vain-glory; but arguments of usefulness and engagements to serviceableness for God; for, to whom much is given, of him much shall be required. These will heighten our account when God shall examine how we have traded with his talents, how honoured him, or benefitted our selves or others by the knowledge we have of him.

Indeed pride is the Scholars sin, *ἡ γνῶσις οὐκ αἰσχύνη*: there was a tumour of pride breeding in the Apostle, by reason of his multitude of revelations, had not God let it out by the thorn in the flesh. That chain of gold, which adorns my neck, helps to sink me deeper, if I be a drowning; Arts and Sciences are your ornaments, but if not sanctified, may sink you the deeper into perdition. *Surgunt indocti & rapiunt celum*, was a sad complaint of old. One dram of grace will save a man, when a talent of gifts oft presseth men to hel.

1 Cor. 8. 1.

2 Cor. 12. 7.

Seventhly, Let us examine, whether there be not many amongst those, who goe for Christians, to whom God is Gods ἀγνος, many who know as little of God, as if they lived in America. I believe, you (my Brethren) who deal with the multitude, finde this too sadly true, that many worship God upon no other account, then the Romanes did their Jupiter, or the Ephesians their Diana; because he is the God of the nations, and country, in which they were born, and their fore-fathers God, and his worship in credit, and under the magistrates command: who serve God by tradition more then out of conviction of judgement. My Brethren, our spirits should be stirred in us (as Pauls was) with an affection mixed of grief and compassion, when we observe this. But may not we (even at our Athens) finde some to whom God is an unknown God? I hope not; yet (Brethren) notwithstanding all our high-raised notions and speculations of God, he is truly in a Scripture-sence unknown to so many of us as know him not;

Vers. 16.

1. Experimentally. The Devils have more notions of God then the greatest Philosophers in the world. It is possible for a man to have many conceptions, and be able accurately to distinguish and solidly to determine concerning the grace of God, and yet in a Scripture-sence know nothing of it, unless he taste and see that the Lord is gracious. Nicodemus a master in Israel, yet ignorant of the work of regeneration, in respect of which an ordinary Christian may know more then the greatest Scholar. I have read of one Didymus a blinde man, whom for his incomparable learning S. Jerome was wont to call his Seer: many such there are blind as to the abstruse notions of God; but Seers in respect of experience, which is the one-ly true saving knowledge of God.

Tit. i. 16.

Rom. 2. 20.

John 13. 17.

2. Practically and operatively, as our knowledge influenceth upon our lives; to conform them to what we know: otherwise the Gospel and God are but notions to us, and Scripture interprets it as a deniall of God, They profess they know God, but in works they deny him. All our notions of God without this suitable practise can but amount to a μαθηματικὴ γνώσις, a form of knowledge, not to any saving discovery: If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them, not else: If knowledge would do it the Devils might be in heaven. The exprobratory sentence will be at last, not well read or disputed, great Scholar: but well done thou good and faithfull servant. Seneca speaks of some Philosophers of his days, Boni esse desierunt simul ac docti evaserunt, who ceased to be good when they began to be learned: I shall charitably believe no such will be found amongst us, for I speak not these things (as S. Paul saith to his Corinthians) to shame you, but as my beloved Brethren and Friends, I warn you and exhort you in

1 Cor. 4. 14.



in the words of S. Peter, to adde to your knowledge vertue, that you may be such as Seneca would have every teacher to be. *Magis mirerur visum quàm auditum*, such as may be admired more for holiness of life, then subtilty of learning, which God accounts no knowledge, if destitute of the study and practise of obedience, Hereby know we that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith he knoweth him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a lyar, and the truth is not in him.

2 Pet. 1. 5.

1 Joh. 2. 3, 4.

Eightly and lastly, I beseech you, Fathers and Brethren, suffer the word of exhortation, which quickens you to zeal and diligence in the dispensation of the Gospel committed to your trust: that you may effect in your people by the preaching of the word, what the highest improvements of nature (as you have heard) cannot reach, to wit, a saving knowledge of God. God instituted the preaching of his word and Gospel to supply the defect of natural light, the Apostle is expresse, that when in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe. God hath commissioned you on purpose, as he did Paul, to open mens eyes, and turn them from darkness to light. The Priests lips must preserve knowledge, that the people may seek the law at his mouth.

1 Cor. 1. 21.

Acts 26. 18.  
Mal. 2. 7.

In order to bringing the people to a saving knowledge, let me (who would willingly lie as Disciple at your feet) being by providence in this place, take the boldness to give you a three-fold direction.

First, Endeavour to bring those committed to your charge to a Scripture-knowledge of God. Preach God nor according to the abstruse Metaphysical notions of Plato and Aristotle, all which Clemens Alexandrinus saith, are but like a rotten nut, *ὡς τὸ πῦρ ἐσθίου*, which hath no kernel, nothing to feed souls, which must have *ἰσχυρὸς τροφῆς*, as the same Authour: but according to the revelation God hath made of himself in Scripture. Thus you shall approve your selves to God in the discharge of your office. Empty aery speculations may (perhaps) gratifie the humour, phansie, and curiositie of men; but Scripture-truths onely please and honour God. S. Pauls advice to Timothy is very remarkable, Study to shew thy self approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed: and the way to that is *ἐπιστορεύειν*, rightly to divide the word of truth.

2 Tim. 2. 15.

Secondly, Preach a God in Christ. The Heathen can arrive at the knowledge of a God abstractly considered; but a God in Christ is beyond the reach of natural sagacity, but is your Commission to make known. God saith the Apostle, hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation: but what is that? why, that God

2 Cor. 5. 19.

was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Lay this as the foundation of all your building, Christ in his person, and Christ in his offices: Christ in opposition to nature, in contradistinction to merit and your own works and righteousness.

Thirdly, Let all your other knowledge stoop to the discovering God savingly: and so far as it is not consistent with a plain and profitable discovery of God to the people, lay it aside.

1 Cor. 14.  
18, 19.

1 Cor. 2.2.

Coloss. 2.3.

Mark. 4.33.

Rev. 2.4.

Ephes. 4.8.

S. Paul, though brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, yet layd down his learning at the feet of Christ, and professeth, that though he spake with tongues more then they all, yet in the Church he had rather preach five words, that he might teach others, then ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. At Athens indeed, a famous University, he quoteth a Poet, Acts 17. vers. 28: but when he comes to his Corinthians, then he determines to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified: *ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἔσπira*, non magni feci, is Grotius gloss, I valued no knowledge but disesteemed it, that I might bring you to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, as crucified. Our Saviour who had in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, yet condescended to the capacity of those whom he instructed, speaking the word to them as they were able to hear it. In this Christ is a fit pattern for our imitation, to teach us by a familiar plainness to descend to the understandings of the people. *Quomodo paratus esset impendi pro animabus eorum, si eum pigeret inclinari ad aures eorum*, saith Augustin, in his book *De catechizandis rudibus*.

In a word, you are Stars in the right hand of Christ, which speaks both your security, and your duty; it is the office of stars to shine in the night with that light which they borrow from the Sun: so should you, now we are in a great measure benighted in Atheisme, and ignorance, shine with that light you have borrowed from the Sun of Righteousness, who when he ascended, gave these gifts: Apostles, Pastours, Teachers, for the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ.

There is another notion of the words, which I would willingly touch, Tremellius's translation of the Syriack hinted me to it; that is to say, *Deo abdito*, to whom the Athenians (understanding from their Sybills, Philosophers, and others, that there was but one invisible, incomprehensible, ineffable God) erected this Altar, as Spondanus conjectures. God was known to the Gentiles by no name, and *that*, by which he was called amongst the Jews, might not ordinarily be spoken, as Grotius notes. The name, *Jehovah*, had so much immoderate reverence amongst the old Jews, that it might not be pronounced but by the high Priest, and that onely in the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, and onely on the Day of expiation, as

Gregory



Gregory in his notes observes. Others adde that it was used in their sacrifices, and in the solemn benediction of the people. *Plato*, as quoted by *Eusebius* (lib. 1. cap. 8. *De Præp. Evangl*) styles God,

Note: *God is a hidden and incomprehensible God.*

Hidden,

1. In his nature and essence, in which respect he is said to dwell in thick darkness, and in light inaccessible.

2. In his counsels, and decrees.

3. In his ways and methods of his providences. They are *past finding out*, *Rom. 11. 33.* a mine unfathomable. These things might have been profitably enlarged. I begge your patience to a threefold improvement of this notion, and I conclude.

First, As a check to curiosity, the Scholars sin, *fatalis ingeniorum scabies*, as *Lipsius* calls it. O that we could learn contentedly to be ignorant where God would not have us knowing! and let's not account it a disparagement to acknowledge some depths in God, which our shallow Reason cannot fathom, *faith Chrysostome on Timothy*; and he that thinks to know God as he is, *faith the same Father on John*. The way to make us meer fools, is to affect to know more then God would have us: *Adams* tree of knowledge made him and his posteritie fools. He that affects to pry into the bodie of the Sun, by gazing grows stark blinde, and sees less then he might by those scattered rays in the air. So curiosity in prying into Gods secrets blinds many, and they know less of him, then they might do by those discoveries he hath made of himself in the book of nature and Scripture. *Ne intelligendo faciunt, ut nihil intelligent*, *faith the Comedian*.

It is the credit of our Religion, to acknowledge such a God as is unsearchable. *Erubescite, Philopse, tam parvum Deum habere, ut tu parvus per parvam mentem tuam totum ipsum scrutaris*, as *Bradwardine* checks the prying Philosophers.

God is most knowable, though we know least of him: as the Sun is most visible, and yet our weak eyes least able to behold it, it is *Aquinas*'s similitude. *Non est mirum si ignoratis, majoris esset admirationis, si sciat*, *faith Arnobius*: and therefore it becomes us to be modest, and humble in our enquiries into God. The Apostle commands us, *Rom. 12. 3.* *to think soberly, Sapere ad temperantiam*, as *Augustin* reads it. Curiosity is a spiritual drunkenness, that look, as the drunkard, be the cup never so deep, he is not satisfied, unless

1 King 8. 12.  
1 Tim. 6. 16.

Page 598.

Page 54.

Lib. contr.  
Gentes.

Epist. 77.

unless he see the botome of it: so the curious searcher into the depths of God, though never so profound, he is unsatisfied till he comes to the bottom of them: and where the Apostle stands as by the brink of the *Ocean*, and cryes, <sup>3</sup> *sed deus*, these presume they can by the line of their reason fathom them; nay, rather then not, they will make all Gods *depths* to be *shallows*, as the *Remonstrants* do.

Me thinks (*Brethren*) our ignorance in the creatures, and being so far at a loss as to flye to *occulte qualitates*, which *Scaliger* calls *ignorantia asylum*, should check our curiositie in the things of God, and teach us to sit down contented to resolve Gods actions into some *hidden causes*, lying secret in the abyss of eternal knowledge, and infallible will. The Heathen *Seneca* could say, *Nunquam vericundiores esse debemus, quam cum de Deo agitur: modestie never becomes us better, then when we speak of God.* It was good counsel *Calvin* gave *Beza*, *Cave ne te ullis inanibus argutiis irretias*, I shall give the same, especially to younger Students, to avoid entangling with unnecessary niceties, which perplex, not profit; such are thousands of *School-niceties* concerning God; *qui ut intelligatur tacendum est*, saith *Arnobius*; take the English from the Apostle, *become fools that ye may be wise.*

Prov. 2. 3, 4, 5

Secondly, As a spur to industrie. You must not think it an easie thing to obtain a true solid saving knowledge of God: nothing so hard to know as God, which the profound *Bradwardine* demonstrates thus, *Si aliquid sit difficile ad plenarie cognoscendum, & aliquid magis difficile, & aliquid adhuc magis, & ita deinceps, aliquid est summe difficile: & quid nisi Deus?* The Wiseman tells you by what means you must come to this knowledge, *If thou cryest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures: then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and finde the knowledge of God.*

Thirdly, As a quickner of desire, to provoke us to long for heaven, where it will be our happiness to know God perfectly, though then we shall not know him comprehensively: for God is *infinita veritatis, cognoscibilitatis*, as *entitatis*; so must either lay aside his infinitie, and cease to be God, or elevate us above the condition of finite creatures, before we can be capable of any comprehensive vision, which supposeth an equal commensuration between the object, and the facultie: but we shall know God so fully then as to make us perfectly happy, and what we see now but in a glass darkly, we shall then see face to face. *Ecce sapientia qua curiositas hominis satiatur!* saith *Bernard*. Then your curiositie



riofitic shall be wholly satisfied, and your understandings so strengthened and elevated by the light, as to behold that God, which dazzles the weak eye of reason, which elevated to its height, cannot reach any *saving* knowledge of God: But still he will be ΘΕΟΣ ΑΓΝΩΣΤΟΣ, the *hidden* and *unknown* God.

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FINIS.

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which shall be wholly satisfied, and your understanding is  
enlightened and elevated by the light, as to behold the God,  
which dazzles the weak eye of reason, which elevated is not  
deceived, cannot reach any false knowledge of God: But  
it will be once, and forever, the truth and the  
know God.

FIXIS

M



SPIRITUAL THRIFT,  
OR  
GOOD HUSBANDRY  
FOR  
THE SOUL.

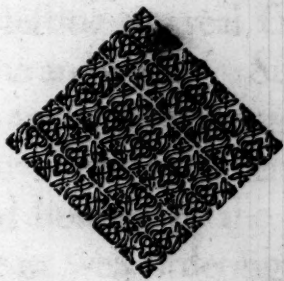
A  
Sermon preached in *Greys-Inne-Chappel*,  
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St. JOHN'S Chappel in  
CAMBRIDGE:

By JOHN FROST, B. D. late  
Fellow there, and Preacher in  
*S. Olaves-Hartstreet* London.

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Πολυτέλειον ἀνάλωμα χείρας. *Plutarch.*  
Τοσούτον ἔτι μᾶλλον σεβαστέον καὶ πάντα ποιῆν. *Chrysostom.* in 1 Cor.  
Hom. 12.

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CAMBRIDGE:  
Printed by *John Field*, Printer to the Universitie.  
*Anno Dom. MDCLVII.*

SPRITUAL THIEF  
OR  
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Hom. 12.



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TO THE  
**HONOURABLE**  
 THE LADY  
**ELISABETH TOLLEMACH,**

Relict and Dowager of  
 Sir **LYONELL TOLLEMACH,**  
 Knight and Baronet, deceased,

All happiness of this life, and that  
 which is to come.

MADAM,



Our esteem of, and favour to the  
 Authour of these Sermons, hath  
 made me presume to shroud  
 them under your Patronage, as  
 well to give some countenance  
 to them, as to testify my real Gratitude for  
 your favours to me and mine. Such are your  
 excellent Vertues and Endowments; your pie-  
 tie to God, and devotion in his service; your  
 charitie to all, and bountie to the poor; your  
 care and diligence in well-ordering, and good  
 education of your Family; insomuch as not  
 onely of your Children, but *all* your Children,  
 are found walking in the Truth: that I cannot  
 think by these to adde any thing to your present

perfection. I offer them to you, as poor men bring presents to the rich: if they may carrie acceptance from you, and bring profit to any soul, it shall abundantly satisfie me. Two main duties of a Christian are the subject of them, *Redeeming the Time*, and *Profiting by the Word*, in both which you are exemplarie to others, and so the fittest Patroness for these Sermons: I therefore humbly betake them to your Protection, and you to the Protection of the Almighty: to whose Grace you, and yours, are daily commended in the weak prayers of,

MADAM,

*Your most humbly devoted*

*servant, and unworthy*

*Minister,*

JOHN FROST.



EPHES. 5. 16.

ΕΞΑΓΟΡΑΖΟΜΕΝΟΙ ΤΟΝ ΚΑΙΡΟΝ.

*Redeeming the time.*

**H**ow beautifull are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! saith the Apostle, Rom. 10. 15. *ὡς ἀπόστολοι*, the word signifies *seasonable, opportune, or a word in its houre*, and such indeed is beautiful, as *apples of gold in pictures of silver*, saith the *Wise-man*, Prov. 25. 11. And such will this appear to be, which I present you with at this time: whether we consider our *times* in general, and take up the Apostles argument here, they are *evil* both in regard of *sin* and *suffering*, of *error* and *profaneness*, or the *place* we live in, we shall easily conclude, none to be more engaged in this duty, then our selves (of this more in the progress of this discourse); or lastly, if we consider that *mispence* of time, which (I speak it to your shame, and am sorry that I have this occasion of speaking to the words) to the dishonour of God, scandal to these places of education, so shamefully abounds amongst us: so that we may complain of many among us now, as *Seneca* did, *Plerisq; simul ad temporis jacturam ventum est, profusissimi in eo, cujus solius honesta est avaritia*. Time is the onely thing we can innocently be covetous of, & yet there is nothing of which many are more lavishly and profusely prodigal. *Re omnium pretiosissimā luditur*, we trifle with that which is most precious, and throw away that which is our greatest interest to *redeem*, *ἐξαγοράζωμεν τὸν καιρὸν*.

De brevitare  
vita.

The Text is a lesson of *spiritual thrift*, and *good husbandry*, and resolves it self into this plain Doctrine,

Doctrine.

*It is the concernment and duty of every one to be conscientious in redeeming his time.*

In prosecution of which four things present themselves to our discourse.

First, what it is to redeem the time.

Secondly, why we are to be conscientious in this.

Thirdly, who are especially concerned in it.

Fourthly, the Improvement and Application.

First, what it is to redeem the time. In the explication of it, I shall lead you no further then the expression in the Text, *ἐξαγοράζωμεν*.

καίριον

ἡμέρας: which is a *Metaphor* taken from Merchants, and so take the importance of our dutie in these eight particulars.

First, It speaks an *act of wisdom* in embracing the *present opportunity*, as opposed to that dangerous folly, by which many befool, delude, and ruine themselves, viz. by resting upon fond presumption of future times, as if they had it at command. *Utuntur illo laxius*, saith *Seneca*, *quasi gratuito*, as if it were at their beck, and disposal, who mispend their present day of grace, and put off the weighty concernment of their salvation, of their trading for spiritual merchandize, till the day be spent, and the mart over; this is not ἐξαργυρεύειν. A Merchant when he comes to a mart or fair, he takes his first season and opportunity of purchasing his commodities, puts it not off to the hazard of an evening, or the next dayes bargain, upon presumption then to have it cheaper, lest the commodities be gone in the mean season. In this, *the children of this world are wiser in their generations*, then we who pretend to be *children of light*. How do most neglect the present time God puts into their hands? play, idle, nay, sin away their market-day, upon that presumption to have grace and glory at a very cheap and easie rate, when they come to die? resolve, perhaps, sometime hereafter to trade for such merchandise which are spiritual, and while they are reckoning, the evening of death overtakes them, and the mart breaks up, and so they are miserably disappointed. Like the *foolish virgins*, who had their *oyl* to get, when the *Bridegroom* came, *Matth. 25. 8.* then they would have been *buying*, but then the *trading* was over, the *Exchange* shut up. He was a wise Merchant indeed, whom we read of *Matth. 13. 44.* who without delay presently went and bought the field in which the treasure was hid. τῶν αἰώνων, αἰῶνας, all in the *present tense*. This piece of *wisdom* spiritual all the Scripture every where urgeth upon us, as *Hebr. 3. 15.* *To day if ye will hear his voice:* and, *Now is the accepted time*, *2 Cor. 6. 2.* and so our Saviour, *Joh. 12. 33.* *Walk while you have the light:* Our Saviour himself indeed set us a copy and pattern of this in his own example: *Joh. 9. 4.* *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day.* This language becomes every one of us, we must work while we have the day of grace: *the night of death cometh, in which none can work.* Let us get our work done while our day lasts, the present time is onely ours; *Pōst est occasio calva*, no fastning or taking hold of it: we can no more secure our selves the future, then recall *past* time: therefore it is an act of the highest wisdom to embrace the *present*, the want of which our Saviour lamented in Jerusalem, *Oh that thou hadst known in this thy day!* *Luke 19. 41.* This is onely *thine*, the next is *Gods day*: This is our *day of grace*, the

next



next may be the day of Gods vengeance. The old world had a long day, while Noah, the preacher of righteousness, warned them; the next was Gods day of vengeance, then he brought the flood upon them. Let us then be so wise, as to use that which onely is ours. *Non tantum est presentis, sed vigilantis est observare occasionem properantem*, saith Seneca. Let us be so wise as to traffick for heavenly merchandise while our market-day lasts, and so to redeem the time: that is the first particular.

Secondly, An act of diligence and faithfulness to improve the time God allots us, as opposed to sloth and idleness. Time is a talent, and God expects improvement of it; and God will charge the non-improvement of it upon us; as he did upon Jezebel, Rey. 2. 21. A Merchant is diligent in improving his time for the enriching himself; you shall not finde him slothfully idle: so should we, who are trading for heaven, for spiritual wisdom, be as much in seeking, laborious in striving; you cannot have them upon easier terms. Prov. 2. 3, 4. there must be getting, and seeking; and searching. Why stand ye here all the day idle? saith Christ, Matth. 23. 5. asleep, saith Calvin. But can we plead, Not guilty? Have not we stood here many a day idle? and mispent much of that time which God gives us to repent, and pray in? Surely, this is not to redeem the time, but, as Zanchy observes, *non permittere ut tempus otio elabatur infructuose*. Idleness is the very buriall of a living man, *id est vivens*, saith the Philosopher, lib. 9. cap. 7. Ethic. Seneca speaking of a most idle person, describes him as one who had been long, but not lived long, *diu fuit, non diu vixit*. Like the statues of *Dadalus*, which they tell us seemed to have souls, but were inanimate: such spectrums an observant eye may take notice of daily, which lodge in and about the Colledge, as if they had not souls to improve with knowledge and learning. That is excellent advice of the Wiseman, Eccles. 9. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might*. For Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord negligently, Jer. 48. 10. It is an act of diligence, that's the second particular.

Thirdly, An act of discretion in laying out our time in our proper callings, as opposed to those *callings* in 1 Per. 4. 15. It is possible for a man to study hard, and take a great deal of pains to loose his time, and to be laboriously idle, when he layes not out his time in reference to that particular calling he is designed for. A Merchant we know regards not the traffick of other men, but layes out his time and skill for that merchandize which belongs to his particular trade: so should we in the improvement of our time, look especially to that concernment of our particular callings. A man may mispend his time as much *aliud agendo*, as *nihil agendo*, doing that

Arift. Ethic.  
lib. 9. cap. 7.

10. 10. 10. 10.

that which *nothing* concerns him, as by doing *nothing* at all. Such are those *Dictatores ab aratro*, who leap from the plough or shop-board into the pulpit: they may seem to be zealous redeemers of their time; but indeed mispend it as unhappily in placing their endeavours upon that, which God never designed them unto: therefore the Apostle oft restrains our diligence to our particular callings. Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8. *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophesie, let us prophesie according to the proportion of faith: or ministry: let us wait on our ministering, or he that teacheth on teaching: or he that exhorteth on exhortation, &c.* And so we may see how specially he instructs Timothy, 1 Tim. 4. 13. *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine: and vers. 15. meditate on these things, give thy self wholly to them:* fit employment indeed for a Timothy, suitable to the special office of the ministry. And in 1 Cor. 7. 20. he layes down a general direction for all: *Let every man abide in the same calling, wherein he is called, and in that improve, and redeem his time.* Domitian was very industrious, but in that unbecomed his estate & employment: viz. in *catching flies*. Nero lost his time, when he studied and affected more the commendation of a *skilfull fiddler* than a good *Emperour*. Our employments should bee fitted to our callings, and if so, diligence in the meanest labour is acceptable service unto God: but if otherwise, the greatest labour is but lost time. Thus for a Minister to be immersed in worldly employments is mispence of his time, because *misce* as to his main end and design of his office. Christ will endure no *buyers* and *sellers* in the Temple. That diligence, which is commendable in one, may be loss of time in another: thus *Romances*, *plays*, and such like are mispence of time in one, whose design is the handling of the *sacred oracles*: the plea for them is that they *elevate* the *phansy*, the truth is, rather they *effeminate* the *minde*, that should in the mean time be exercised in deepest speculations.

Fourthly, An act of *labour* and *solicitude* in regaining time formerly mispent: that is, by doubling their diligence for the future. Time let slip is *Physically* irrecoverable; but in a *moral* consideration is accounted as regained, when we double our endeavours and care. As a Merchant, who hath had great loss, doubles his labour in his future traffique: so should we who have mispent our time (and which of us hath not too much?) now redeem it, by a more zealous and conscientious improvement of it. Thus we may at once testify the sincerity of our sorrow for our former mispence, and in some measure repair the dishonour we have thereby done to God. Thus S. Paul, who had wickedly laid out his time in blaspheming and persecuting the Church, afterward redeemed it, by *labouring*

more



more abundantly then all the rest of the Apostles, 1 Cor. 15. 10.

Fifthly, It speaks an act of *prudence*, in choosing and embracing the fittest opportunities and seasons for all our actions, and this is the proper import of the word *καιρός*, *season*. To this the Apostle directs Galat. 6. 10. *καιρόν ἐργάζεσθε*. A Merchant watcheth the fittest opportunity for his trade and purchase: so should Christians choose the fittest season for all their actions, wherein they most promote Gods glory, their own and others good. All actions of Religion are not seasonable at all times: the *Wise-man* observes, *To every thing there is a season*, Eccles. 3. 1. as to instance. *Fraternal correction*, a duty, in which, if duly exercised, the good of Christians is much concerned, yet not seasonable at many times, as to reprove a scorner in the height of his scorning; or a drunkard in the heat of his cups. When the poor begs, there is thy opportunity of charity, or when their cause is represented to thee. When thou art wronged, then is thy season to demonstrate thy patience and mercy in forgiving. When thou seest a *Samaritan* lie wounded, then is the opportunity of thy pouring in wine and oyl: and, when thy brother falleth into sin, there is the opportunity for exercising thy brotherly help to restore him in the spirit of meekness, Galat. 6. 1. Some actions may be seasonable at all times, so for prayer every time may be seasonable enough, *ἐν παντί καιρόν* Ephes. 6. 18. so Rom. 12. 11. where some read *καὶ καιρόν*, others *καιρὸν δαπάνης*: whence *Bellarmino* would prove the text to be corrupted; but I think good use may be made of both; as the perceiving the fittest season for those other actions. And so some actions of Religion are more seasonable at some times, then at others: as

1. The morning of every day for devotion: *Aurora Musis*; yea, and for the *Graces* too: so *David* esteemed of it, Psal. 88. 13. *In the morning shall my prayer prevent thee*: so the primitive Christians judged it the fittest season, as *Pliny*, no friend to them hath it, They were wont, saith he, *Stato die ante lucem convenire, & se Sacramento obstringere, nè furta, nè latrocinia, nè adulteria committerent*. And the morning indeed is the fittest season for all religious exercises: of which one of the Ancients gives this reason, because then the *τὸ ἡγιασμένον* is not disturbed with those images and representations of things, which the varietie of wordly employments in the day-time usually possess us with. This you may observe to have been *Job's* practise, Job 1. 5. He rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings. And so we read of the Apostles, that they went early into the temple, Acts 5. 21. So early should we be in our actions of devotion.

2. The Sabbath of every week. That should especially be re- deemed,

Plin. Epist.  
lib. 10. ep. 67.

deemed, even from those employments, which we may lawfully entertain upon other daies : this is, as I may so say, the *market-day* for souls ; in which you may especially trade for spiritual Merchandize, and yet how sinfully lavish are many amongst us of this day, that many amongst us sleep away the greatest part of the market ! what else means the absence of so many, especially on *Sabbath-day* mornings, from these publick exercises: the Chappel being thinner then, then at other times ? And yet there is a Divine stamp and impression upon this day ; and that it be carefully observed by us, all the equitie in the world calls for it, God having indulged us the rest of the week for our selves and callings ; and so we see the Apostles care was to *redeem* it wholly to *holy* exercises ; upon the first day of the week, the disciples came together, for breaking of bread, and preaching, &c. Acts 20.7.

Sixthly, An act of *expen*ce and charge, when we are willing to be at cost for the *redeeming* of our time, and to part with something that we may *improve* it. As Merchants are at charge for their merchandize, they are oft laying out their treasure, have many a troublesome voyage and restless nights, for the securing and bringing in of their merchandizes : so should Christians spare some of their lawfull pleasures and recreations of their natural rest and sleep, that they may *redeem* and *improve* their *time* ; which is not onely *non abuti occasione, sed etiam mille voluptatibus redimere*, as *Beza* glosseth. Merchants prefer the least gain before the fullest pleasure : he adventures all his riches ; the Merchant in the parable parted with all, sold it for the field, Matt. 13. It is said of our blessed Saviour, Galat. 3. 13. *Χεῖρας ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν*, (the same word that is in our Text). How so ? He parted with all, pleasure, profit, life and all, for the accomplishment of this end : so should we in an ingenuous return of gratitude, part with our pleasures and all, that we may consecrate our time to his service. Not, but we may lawfully use pleasures and recreations, so they be not vain, and such as do rather enervate, then refresh the minde, or too much expensive of that time we should redeem to Gods glorie, and the interest and concernments of our own souls. It was the custome of the *Primitive* Christians to *redeem* some time from their sleep for the service of God, which did ἀγγελικῇ ἐξισοζήτησιν, as *Clement* observes, exalt them to an Angelical perfection, which lies in a watchful, constant observance, yea, and expence of their *time*, or *eternity* rather, in the service of God. And I read in *Nicephorus* of *Theodosius* the Emperour, that after the variety of worldly employments, relating to his civil affairs in the day-time, he was wont to consecrate the greatest part of the night to the studying of the Scriptures : to which end, he had a lamp

*Clement.*



lamp so artificially made, that it supplied it self with oyl, that he might no way be interrupted in dedicating that *time* to God.

Seventhly, An act of *watchfulness* in avoiding what may betray us to the *mispence of time*: such are especially *frothy and idle discourses*, and *bad and loose company*. A Merchant will not engage himself in *impertinent discourse*, or *voluptuous companie*, when he should be driving on his *trade*. These every man must avoid, that would *redeem his time*; for *bad companie* draws into sin and idleness: upon this account God forbade the *nations* to dwell with the Jews, *Exod. 23. 33.* therefore *David* would have no *commerce* with such, *Psal. 119. 115.* as if he could not spend his time in the service of God, while such were in his companie. *Idle company* is the shame of *Societies*, the bane of *pietie*, the corruption of *youth*, the quencher of *devotion*, the *lavisher of time*. He that desires to be *provident* of his time, must be prudent in the choise of his *Societie*, otherwise, in *bad company*, he may quickly throw away time, and himself, soul, eternitie and all.

Eighthly, An act of *deliberate and resolved judgement*, to lay out our time for the *best things*. As a Merchant will not expend his time and money for *toyes and trifles*, but for *pearls*, and the like. *Curiosè merces considerat ut emat meliores*, saith *A Lapidè* on the Text; *examines his wares, that he may purchase the best*: so should Christians in laying out their time, not lay it out for trifles of the world, but for the greatest things of eternitie: not with *Martha* for the many things, but with *Mary* for the *one thing necessarie*. The Merchant in the Gospel indeed sold all, but it was to purchase the *pearl*: and *S. Paul* counted all loss, but it was to gain *Christ*, *Philip. 3. 8.* Those who spend their time for the vanities of the world, for the light air of popular applause, for the shadow of honour, riches, or the like (not to mention the debasing of their souls, which are born to greater hopes and designs): they throw away their time, and often their souls, in such bargains: to whom let me say with the Prophet *Esay, 55. 2.* *Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?* We are here at *Athens*, that *Emporium scientiarum*, trafficking for wisdom and knowledge; but let me suggest this, We do but throw away our times, though laboriously ordered to this end, if in the mean time we are careless of spiritual wisdom: *Those merchandizes are better then the merchandizes of silver, and her gain then of fine gold*, *Prov. 3. 14.* In respect of which, our trading here for all other knowledge, is but mere downright *pedlery*. We may mispend our time in our studies, if so addicted to them, as to neglect our devotions, and other studies to God. *Melchior Adam* tells us of *Luther*, that

*Melch. Adam  
in vit. Lutheri  
pag. 142.*

every day he spent three hours in prayer, *etiam studiis aptissimas*, even those that were fittest for his studies: and it was his usual saying, *Bene orasse est bene studuisse*: to pray well, with him, was to studie well. Prayer is as oyl to the lamp, makes it burn clearly, and lastingly. So again, if our sollicitude for other knowledge makes us neglect, and regardless of our knowledge of Christ. S. Paul gat much knowledge at the feet of Gamaliel, but when he came to understand himself, he counted it all dross for the knowledge of Christ, *Philip. 3.8*. If we would be wise Merchants, we must trade for heaven and eternitie, and lay up our treasure there, and amidst our heats, and pursuits of other knowledge, lay out our time and prayers especially for the knowledge of Christ, *whom onely to know is life eternal, John 17.3*. And that is the first General.

2. General.

Secondly, Why we are to be conscientious in this.

First, It is the verie end of thy creation: and that,

1. As a creature: God did not create, and set us in the world, as the Psalmist saies of the Leviathan, to take our pastime, to be slothfull and idle, but to be in action and employment. God created all things for man, and man for himself, therefore ought to be in continual motion, and tendencie towards God. As all things naturally tend to their end, as their rest and perfection: so should man to God, as his happiness and rest. Idleness is a contradiction to the principles of our creation. Man in innocencie should have been freed from weariness, but not from employment: he was to dress the garden, and that by Gods appointment: And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it, *Gen. 2.15*. *Cui summa cum voluptate vacaret*, saies Augustin. Vexing and tormenting labour, was indeed the punishment of sin, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, Gen. 3.19*. Therefore as a creature, redeem thy time.

2. As the most noble creature. God at first did not create any one thing useles: you cannot cast your eyes any way, but every creature checks, and upbraids your idleness and sloth: and I hope this will not seem an impertinent argument, to put you upon improvement of your time. Solomon sends the sluggard to the Ant to learn industrie, *Prov. 6.6*. If you look up to the heavens, you see them in a continual motion, and the Sun running his course to supply you with light, and that not as children to play in the Sun-shine, but that the Sun arising, man may go forth unto his labour. If you cast your eyes down to the earth, you shall see it travelling with fruits, and grasse, and herbs for your use; and we may well go to school to these to learn labour and industrie. Our Saviour sends us to the Sparrows, and Lillies to learn attendance upon Providence: the Prophet

Augustin. de  
Gen. ad. lit.  
lib. 8. cap. 8.

Psal. 104. 23.

Matt. 6. 26,  
18.



phet sends the Jews to the *stork* and the *ass* to learn obedience unto, and waiting upon God, *Jerem. 8. 7.* *Esay 1. 3.* and I may send you to every creature to learn this lesson of an *industrious redeeming* of your time. Christ judgeth the *figge-tree* but an *unprofitable burthen* to the earth, when it brought forth no fruit, *Luke 13. 7.* Now man is the *most noble creature*, into whom God hath put principles of the greatest activities, as capable of the greatest enjoyments, so fitted with faculties, and principles to move towards them; therefore *idleness* is a *forgetting mans dignitie*, forsaking the rank God hath set him in, and *debasing* himself below the meanest creatures, who constantly in their order, and obedientially *serve the law of their creation*. Nay, look to the creatures above you, the *Angels*, they are in constant employment, as *ministering spirits* for your good, *Heb. 1. ult.* and these may teach you *diligence* in, and *improvement* of your time.

3. Consider, Christ spent all his time in the world for thee: from his birth (*To us a child is born*; *Isaiah 9. 6.*) to his death, he died for our offences, *Rom. 4. 25.* His soul was in a *continual travel* to save thee: and shall not this engage thee? Christs life was a *continual labour* to redeem thee; and shall not this engage thee to redeem thy time, and expend thy life in his service? In this he was a *pattern*, and example for our imitation. The Apostle judgeth this to be the most reasonable thing in the world, *2 Cor. 5. 14.* *For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge: that if one died for all, then were all dead. And what he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.* So that mispence of our time is not only unanswerable to our creation, but unworthy, and unsuitable to the work of our redemption. For he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie to himself a *peculiar people*, *zealous of good works*, *Tit. 2. 14.* The time thou enjoyest, is the purchase of Christs blood, and he bought it not for thee, to lavish out on thy lusts, or to throw it away idly: no, the Apostle tells you of another end, *1 Cor. 6. 20.* *Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorifie God both in your bodies and spirits, &c.*

4. Consider, that the Devil is very laborious and industrious in spending all his time to destroy thee. He looseth not a minute of day or night, that he may compass this end: *1 Pet. 5. 8.* *Thou adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.* Oh that we could learn this lesson from Satan himself, to be as industrious in laying out our time in working out our salvation, as he is in plotting our damnation! The Apostle would have us to learn this from it, *2 Pet. 1. 4.* *Be vigilant*; and so we had need, if

Hierom. ep. 4.

we consider, that nothing gives the devil so much advantage of us, as idleness. It was good counsel, that *Ferome* gave to his friend, *Facito aliquid operis, ut te semper diabolus inveniat occupatum*; that when the devil comes with a temptation, you may answer him, *you are not at leisure*. The devils temptations, which rush in upon us with an irresistible violence, cannot without repeated and frequent sollicitations get entrance into the soul, if it be well employed. The fowler bends his bow, and spreads his net for birds, when they are set, not when they are upon the wing: so Satan shoots his fierie darts at men, when they are idle and remiss; it will not pierce the soul when it is upon the wing in devotion, or industriously employed in any lawfull calling. *S. Chrysostome* mentions two originals of mens ruine, *idleness*, and *remissnes*.

5. Consider, that *idleness* and *misimprovement* of our time betraies us to the worst of sins (and this followes upon the former) because it disposes the soul to the entertainment of every temptation. *Othum diaboli pulvinar*; *Idleness is the devils cushion*; upon which Satan sits, and broods his temptations. How was *David's* soul as tinder to the spark of lust, which Satan injected and threw into it? The glance of *Bathsheba* so fired his heart, that it brake into a flame of lust: what was the reason of this? He was idly walking, 2 Sam. 11. 2. The Heathens in their *Hieroglyphicks* describe *Cupid* lifting up a hand and a torch, and *idleness* managing the hand, and ordering the stroke to the heart, whereby the heart is inflamed with lust. *Plodore* calls idleness, *ἀργιότης ἢ μαδωρ*, the garrison and fort of the passions, which are all unruly and disorderly: It is *promptuarium scelerum*, *apotheca vitiorum*, as another: no sin comes amiss to him; he is plotting himself, and as ready to comply with other mens contrivements of sin, as being at a loss how to spend his time. With how easie a temptation, was *Peter* brought to denie his Master? the chief reason questionless was pusillanimous fear of suffering, but his idleness might contribute much to it; he was sitting idle in the High-Priests palace, Matt. 26. 69. God prescribed labour to man, not onely as a punishment, but as a cure, and prevention of sin: *ut laborando recuperet, quod otiosus comedendo perdidit*, saith *Stella*. He was set to dress the garden, and he would idly entertain a discourse with the devil. So *pride*, that's another product of idleness: when men have little to do, they can finde time to invent foolish and ridiculous fashions, onely to cherish *pride* and *vanitie*: and others spending their time on the Lords-day, between the comb and the glass, which should be employed in preparatorie acts of devotion, to be consecrated unto God, as introductions to the publick-service: you may finde this was the cause of *Sodom's*

*Isid. lib. 1.*  
ep. 9.

*Stella in Luc.*  
10.

*Sodom's*



Sodom's pride, *Ezek. 16. 49. abundance of idleness was in her.* Thus you see by Scripture-instancies, that *Lust, Apostacie, and Pride* are the sad issues of an idle misimprovement of time: when men are not faithfully employed, the devil will employ them, (the soul of man is so active, that it cannot be idle, and, if not set on work, the devil will be sure to finde work for them) and they are in as readie a posture of obedience, as the Centurions servants: there is no preserving the health of the bodie without exercise, and these diseases will grow upon the soul too fast, if not prevented by a diligent improvement, and redeeming of our time.

6. Consider, *Time is a talent*, and therefore God expects an improvement of it. Our time is not at our own dispose to be lavished out in pursuance of our own lusts and designs, but a *talent* to be improved for our Masters glorie. And as he expected suitable improvement according to the number of *talents*, delivered to his servants, *Matt. 25. 15.* according as one, or more. So as God gives us the longer time, the more years, he expects our improvement of it: every day is a *talent* or *time* put into our hands, and therefore he expects we should every day improve it. Nay,

7. Consider, *Time is such a talent*, upon the faithful improvement of which, depends the improvement of all our other *talents*. God intrusts us with, whether *gifts* or *graces*. *Action*, as it begets, so it increases, strengthens, and secures the *habits* which are lost and weakned, not onely by contrarie actions, but by remission of their proper *act*: *gifts* decay and wither, *grace* grows dull, and gradually decays, if not acted and improved. The *talent* laid up in the *napkin* you know did not increase, no more then if it had been lavishly spent. How many by idleness have suffered their *parts* and *gifts* to rust, and by Gods judicial proceeding, have lost them fearfully! So unexercised *grace* is, as comfortless, so withering & decaying. The *sword*, that is kept bright by using, rusts in the scabbard; and *waters*, which keep sweet and clean by motion, contract filth, and stinch by standing; air without motion corrupts, and grows pestilential; flames not in motion perish: so do mens *gifts* rust, and even come to nothing, if not exercised. The *souldiours valour* decays, and is impaired in the garrison, but is increased and quickned in the field and battel. Idleness and remissness enervate the virtues of the soul, but they are strengthened by improvement. As therefore S. Paul exhorts *Timothy*, *ἀναζωοποίη, so stir up the gift of God that was in him*; to keep it alive, as fire, and that by constant blowing: should we preserve our *gifts* and *graces* by redeeming of our time: especially,

8. Considering, that *time* is such a *talent*, as God will certainly

ly call to account for. The Apostle urgeth an holy improvement of time upon this account. 1 Pet. 42, 5. these two verses compared together; one thing God will account for at the great day, will be our *Time*. Oh! how sad will it be for many gray-heads to appear at that day, as old in sin as years, to answer for the expence of three or fourscore years, which perhaps they have uselessly spent in vanitie and sin? Then God will bespeak men thus: *Come give me an account of that time, which I gave thee to glorifie me, and to work out thine own salvation in, and thou hast been spending it in pursuance of the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.* What a sad charge will this be at that day to thousands in the world? Oh that we had hearts to consider it, before it be too late; while time lasts, before eternitie overtake us! what account shall they give of their time, who lavish it out in idle sports and pastimes, in pride, excess, and vanitie? as that King of Persia, of whom *Alian* tells us, who promised a large reward to any, who would invent any new sports and recreations. See how the Wise-man checks young men, (who commonly are most profuse, and careless of their time) in the midst of their jollitie with suggesting this account unto them. *Rejoyce, O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the daies of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine own heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement, Eccles. 11. 9.* he speaks by an Ironical concession, *Go on, spend your time in vanitie, but after you have done so, know for certain you must come to judgement.*

Var. hist. lib. 1.

9. Consider, it is a day of grace, and the time of patience, which God now affords thee. Now the door of mercie stands open, therefore we should not, with the foolish virgins, sleep away this time, lest the door be shut against us, as it was against them, *Matt. 25. 10.* So as *Esaú*, who lost the blessing, because he came to late: this is the time of our reprieve allotted unto us, in which to sue out our pardon: *Account that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation, 2 Pet. 3. 15.* *Plutarch* calls it χρόνος πρὸς ἐπιάνοισιν, ἢ μετάνοισιν χρόνος, and that it is, *ἡσυχία ἡρενά*: and much more to the same purpose may be found in that excellent piece of the slothenes of the gods in punishing sinners. The Scripture speaks the same, *Rom. 4. 2. the goodness of God should lead thee to repentance*: and *Revel. 2. 21. χρόνος ἵνα μετανόησιν, time, that she might repent.* He now stands at the door and knocks; he gives us a day of grace, and it will be our interest to redeem it to those ends, for which he affords it. *Time is illud unum, quod nē gratis quidem potest reddere*, saies the Heathen *Seneca.*

Seneca. ep. 1.

10. Consider, It will be your wisdom to redeem it: *Ephes. 5. 15.*



10. It is desperate folly and madness for a condemned malefactor to trifle away the time of his reprieve, as arguing a slighting of the Princes favour in allowing it to him: or for a Merchant to idle away the time of his trade: we are here upon our reprieve, it doeth speak our unsensibleness of, and unthankfulness for this mercie of God, if we foolishly lavish it out, and not improve it to get our pardon, and peace made and secured. It is the time of our trading, let us not be such fools as Solomon speaks of, *Prov. 17. 16. as having a price in our hand, and have no hearts to use it.* Our Saviour makes it a Character of a wise man, that *he got his house built upon a rock, before the floods came, and the winds blew, Matt. 7. 24, 25.* it will be our wisdom to get our selves built upon the rock, Jesus Christ, by faith, to lay out our time in *making our calling and election sure, Philip. 2. 10.* It is your wisdom, especially if you,

11. Consider, This day of grace will not alwaies last. The time will come, if we now neglect them, that the things that belong to our everlasting peace will be hid from our eyes, *Luke 19. 41.* Jerusalem's day had a night, and then she was left in darkness, who had formerly slighted the light: you may see the length of your time, *Psal. 90. 10. It is soon cut off, and we flee away;* this must have a period. The Apostle tells us, that *the long-suffering of God waited in the dayes of Noah, 1 Pet. 3. 20.* yet that day ended in a deluge. If the figge-tree was spared three years; yet afterward it was cut up.

12. Consider, Thou knowest not how soon thy time may end, thy day be spent; perhaps when thou least expectest it. The night may overtake thee, before thou thinkest thy day half-spent; and thereupon art remis and secure, as promising thy self a longer day: the bridegroom came at *midnight, while the foolish virgins slept, Mat. 25.* The last day shall come upon many unawares, and especially you know upon whom, and it is upon such, as mispend their time in *sursetting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, Luke 21. 34.* How soon a period may be put to any of our daies, he onely knows, in whose hands our times are, *Psal. 31. 15.* therefore it is our concernment to redeem our present time. It is a saying of the Jews, which De Dieu quotes out of Hillel, *Noli dicere, donec vacabis mihi, differre studium Legis, fortasse non vacabit:* and it was good counsel he gave his Scholar, that he should be sure to repent one day before he died; which came to this, that he should repent every day, because he knew not but that might be the day of his death. The Apostle useth the shortness of life, as an argument of labour, *1 Cor. 7. 29.* This I say, brethren, the time is short: not over solicitous for the things of

this world, but imploying our time for the concernment of eternity.

13. Consider, That time once gone is *lost irrecoverably*. We use to say, *time staies not the parties leisure*, nor is it to be recalled at his command: the foolish virgins knock't, but it was too late, & the door was shut upon them, and they irrecoverably excluded. Time is the onely thing irrecoverable: this is a *jewel*, which if once lost, can never be found again. If you loose *Heaven, peace, libertie, ordinances*, nay, *God himself*, you may recover them again with seeking & pains: but *mis-spent time*, as he in *Gregories daies* being sumon'd by death, cries out, *Inducias vel ad horam, but an hour, a minute*, but could not obtain it.

14. Consider, That upon *this time* depends *eternitie*. Every man is *sua fortuna faber* in a sound sence: he is now laying out for himself an eternitie of miseries or happines: he is laying up a *good foundation* for time to come, laying up treasure in heaven, by improving his time, or else by *despising and neglecting* this day of *grace*, treasuring up wrath to himself, *Rom. 2. 4.* and as the tree falls, so it will lie: as time leaves us, so eternitie will finde us: therefore, let us *redeem the time*.

15. Consider, The *longer* our day of *grace* is, if *mis-spent* and *mis-improved*, the *greater* will be our *condemnation*. And God, as *Valerius Maximus* observes of *Dionysius*, *tarditatem supplicii gravitate compensat*: the blow of justice will be the *heavier*, the *longer* it is in coming. The longer God is lifting up the hand of justice, & our repentance prevent it not, the stroke will be the greater: as *Lipsius* observes: *Gods grace and mercie, ita poena intervallum est, ut sit & augmentum*. The time of Gods grace is so now a *reprieve*: that if we continue to abuse his mercie, the execution will be the *heavier*. Gray-hairs found in the way of sin at that day, will have the hottest place in everlasting burning.

16. Consider the *greatness* of our work, compared with the *shortness* of our time, and this may provoke us to diligence in improving it. He that hath a long journey to go in a winters day, will not loyter, but make haste. This is our case: our day is but a *winters-day*, both *sad* and *short*, our journey long, the way narrow and strait, therefore we had need hasten, and strive to enter, and *press forward toward the mark*, and *run with patience this spiritual race*. Our work is to get God *appeased*, our peace *made*, our election *assured*, and for these the Apostle tells us, we must *meditate*, *give all diligence*. The best means for us to use in this, is oft to compute and compare our work, and our time together; *So teach us to number our daies, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*. Mens inapprehensiveness of the greatness of their work, or presumption upon the length of their day, makes them so remiss and negligent in improving their time, with the sluggard crying, *yet a little sleep*, and *Lord have mercy upon me*, as if this would set all streight.

17. Con-

Lips. lib. 2.  
cap. 13. de  
constantia.

2 Pet. 1. 16.

Psal. 90. 12.



17. Consider, What a *sad reflection* it will be in *hell* to remember a *misspent day of grace*. Son remember, said *Abraham* to *Dives*. Will it not be sad for *Capernaum* to reflect thus; *I was exalted to heaven in the enjoyment of means and ordinances, but am now cast down to hell for not improving those means*. And for souls to reflect thus; *We had offers of grace made us, we were beseeched to be reconciled, we were told over and over, that we could not escape, if we did neglect so great salvation: but now our case is desperate, we lavished away that time in sin, which God gave us for repentance, and much of that time in idleness, when we should have been at Church, and at our devotions: Well, God is just, our destruction is of our selves*. Such thoughts as these will be the Hell of Hells. Oh! What would such souls give for a reprieve? Would they not purchase that time they idled and sinned away, with some thousand years continuance there, if at last, they might be released? Consider this you that forget God: while it is time redeem it, that you never come to lament the mis-improvement of it in a sad eremitic, when time shall be no more, and repentance will be too late: 'tis too late for *Esau* to weep, when the blessing is gone, *Hebr. 12. 17*.

Luke 16. 25.

18. Consider, The best of us have done much *dis honour* to God in former *misspence of our time*: let us therefore now *redeem* it. This argument the Apostle uses to urge the laying out of our time in reference to the glory of God, in *1 Pet. 4. 2, 3*. *To live no longer the rest of the time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God: for the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, &c.* Hereby we may repair Gods honour, and testify the sincerity of our repentance and conversion. *Acerrimus stimulus nobis esse debet; ad bene currendum, dum reputamus, nos magnâ parte viâ errasse*, saith *Calvin*. S. Paul had been a long time out of the way, but when once set into it, he *presseth forward* to have the mark, *Διὰ τοῦτο τὸ ὁμιλοῦμαι*: the verie same word by which he expresth his former persecution, *ἰσχυρὰ*: intimating the same contention of, and zeal in his Religion, as before he had demonstrated in his persecution.

Gal. in loc.

Acts 22. 4.

19. Consider, That the *misspence of time* makes thee *odious to God*. God abominates idleness: time is his creature, and he hath allowed none of it for *sin* and *idleness*, though some of it for *honest recreations*. God hath sent every one of us upon some errand or other into the world: if we be negligent, and sluggish in it, we are like *smoke to the eyes*, and *vinegar to the teeth*, and an offence to the pure & holy eyes of God. *Τὸ ὅτι οὐκ ἐκτρέφεται ἡ ἀνέμενος, ὅτι καὶ ἀσπύβη*, saith *Hesiod*.

Prov. 10. 26.  
Hesiod. apy.  
ἡ ἡμέρα. v. 234

20. Consider the argument of the Text here; *ἐν αἷς ἡμέραις πονηραὶ εἰσι*: the *dayes are evil*. And if ever this were pressingly, and rationally argumentative to inforce the duty, it must be certainly for us. *Musculus* complained of his times, *Adcò deploratè mala sunt, ut ne emendari sustineant, nec diutius ferri queant*: so may we of our times,

they are *unsufferable yet uncorrigible*. If you consider the words either in respect of those common evils which attend mankind; such are common afflictions, diseases, wars, uncertainty of our enjoyments of life it self: so the argument is universal to all persons and times: but when times are evil in respect of some particular evils, then especially is time to be redeemed, as our times now are in respect of a double evil, each of which enforceeth this duty upon us: viz. the *growth of error*, and the *open and abounding profaneness* among us.

I. The *Growth of error*: and this should put us upon diligence, especially us, who are in, or look towards the Ministry: we should double and redouble our diligence, that we may be able to appear against error for the truth, and by *sound doctrine* to convince the *gain-sayers*, Tit. 1. 9. When S. Paul saw the times coming, in which men would not *endure sound doctrine*, but *after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers*, being turned away from the truth unto fables, he thought it then very seasonable to write to his beloved Timothy, to be *instant in season, and out of season*, 2 Tim. 4. 2, 3, 4. How much more engaged are we to diligence and industry, upon whom those dayes which S. Paul onely foretold, are sadly fallen: When the devil sows most of the tares of error in the field of the Church: then should the *spiritual husbandmen* be most vigilant and industrious to cast them out, lest they *choke* and *over-grow* the good seed of the word. And to this end, more knowledge (I think) is requisite to the discharge of the *Ministers calling* now, then perhaps was when error was more modest, and withall more restrained by a strict discipline. Every man is naturally apt to applaud the production and birth of his own phansie and imagination (so the *Ethiopian* thinks his *black* the greatest beautie) and through *pride* (which is the *womb* of error) to vent and broach this phansie, though to the disquiet of the Church: therefore, if not restrained by fear (for men naturally are slavish, not ingenuous) much more if publicly authorized, (usually it appears with the face of authority) and the devil will be sure to promote it; he will send up the *smoke* of the *bottomless pit*, to obscure the *beauty of truth*; he will get in his *cloven foot*, and *divide* the *seamless coat*, it being the *maxime* of his Politicians, *Divide & Impera*, *Divide and Rule*: and here indeed is the source of all the errors of our times. Now then we, as Saint Paul, whose *spirit* was stirred in him, to see the idolatry of *Athens*; and whose zeal would not suffer him to do any thing against the truth, but all for it; we should lay out our time to fit our selves with weapons to fight against error, and defend the truth, and to countertermine Sathans devices. S. Paul met with many oppositions; some-



sometimes he had to do with loose *Libertines*, who made the *free grace* he preached, a cloak of maliciousness: another while with proud *Pharisaical Justiciaries*, who denied *grace*, and cried up *works*: the Apostle was to grapple with both these, and so he laboured *more abundantly then all*. The great Controversie of the former age was with the proud *Papist*, as *S. Paul* at *Ephesus*, with the *beast of Rome*. But he that will look now into the ministerie, must reckon to deal with the subtil *Socinian*, the loose *Antinomian*, the canting *Quaker*, the petulant *Anabaptist*, the conceited *Separatist*, the muddie *Atheist*: we had need to provide our weapons, before we go into the field; and, having so many spiritual *Goliaths* to encounter withall, it is our concernment and duty, to get our *sling*, and our *smooth stones* out of the *brook* of the Scriptures, by which we may strike them in the *fore-head*: yea, and to go down to the *Philistines* to *sharpen our weapons*, I mean to furnish our selves with *tongues* and *sciences*, and *rational improvements*; to enervate the strength and subtilties, and detect the *vizards* and *fallacies*, which error usually puts on to delude the ignorant and inconsiderate. Scarce any of the Fathers had so many errors to oppose as *S. Augustine*; the *Pelagian* on the one hand, and the *Manichee* on the other: so none more laborious then he, having left us many monuments of his unwearied diligence; whence he was stiled, *Malleus hæreticorum*. Now so many endeavour to rase the foundation, the spiritual builders should labour more in edifying the truth, and Church of God: the creeping in of so many *wolves* into the *stock* should put the *Pastours* upon more vigilancy, and diligence; now the darkness of error, and night of ignorance is upon us: how should these stars shine in the firmament of the Church? And while others, so many *Sanballats* and *Tobiabs*, endeavour to obstruct, hinder, and overthrow the truth, we should endeavour to lay out our time to enoble and patronize it.

II. The open and abounding *profaneness* that is among us, that *Atheisme*, *licentiousness*, *contempt of God and his word*, and those other crying sins, which run in the midst of the nation, should powerfully provoke us to *redeem our time*: and that upon a fourefold account.

I. That we may *discountenance* and give a *check* to *profaneness*, that our lives may be a constant *standing reproofe* to the wickedness of the times, so the Apostle in this 5. of the *Ephes.* enjoynes at ver. 11. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitfull works of darkness, but rather reprove them*: but how shall that be done? he tells us at ver. 8. *walk as the children of light*: and *Philip. 2. 15. that ye may shine as lights amidst a crooked and perverse generation*. The more others lavish out and mispend this time in loose and licentious walking; the more should

1 Cor. 15. 10

should we endeavour to redeem it by a strict, and conscientious conversation.

2. It will be a *Christians praise and glory* to be good in bad times, to be good husbands when others are prodigals about us. Thus *S. Augustine* gives a reason, why God permitted *Adam* at first to be tempted, *That he might have had the more glory, if he had used his liberty to resist and withstand that temptation. Non mihi videtur*, saith he, *magna laudis fuisse futurum hominem, si propterea posset bene vivere, quia nemo male vivere suaderet.* It is less commendation to be good when we have no temptation to be bad: but when in licentious times, being on every side surrounded with temptations, we go still on in a way of holiness, this is our just praise and glory, as it was of *Lot*, to be righteous in the midst of unclean *Sodom*.

3. In such times we are in most danger to be misled. *Piscator* gives this reason, why the profaneness of the times should put us upon the redeeming of the time: *quia periculum imminet piis a corruptelis mundi.* When it is, as in *1 Joh. 5. 19.* the whole world lies in wickedness; the best are in great danger to be seduced, either into error, sin, or both: we should therefore redeem the time, that we may be able to prevent the one, and oppose the other.

4. Our redeeming the time may make the times better. It is the evil of sin, that make the dayes evil. The Apostle speaking of the perillous times which should be in the last dayes, in *2 Tim. 3. 1.* he tells you the reason of it, in verses 2, 3, 4, 5. the latter of which, (viz. *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power.*) I fear hath a great influence upon the evil of our dayes. Now the onely way to amend the times, is to amend our selves. God would soon amend the times, if once the men that live in the times were amended. It was good counsel *Daniel* gives to *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthning of thy tranquillity.* All men cry out of the times; but who cry out of, or leave their sins, which make the times so bad? When the *Israelites* had sinned in making the calf, *Moses* spends his time in prayer, *Exod. 32.* It was *Achans* wedge, that made it a bad day to *Israel*: when he was removed, God was appeased, *Josh. 7.* Our times are evil; let us not repiningly despond or quarrel, but let us lay out our time in prayer and repentance to make them better. And so much of the second General.

3. General

Thirdly, Who are especially concerned in this. Though indeed none can be exempted from this, yet we shall see, that some are more especially concerned in it: and these I shall reduce to these six ranks.

1. Young



**I. Young ones:** These should especially *redeem* their time. Young Merchants are most vigorous and active in their trading. It is the *Wise man's* counsel, *Eccles. 12. 1. Remember thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth:* it briefly suggests several considerations, which may provoke youth to a diligent *improvement* of their time: as,

1. Consider, This is most *worthy of*, and most *acceptable unto* God, to give him the best of our time, who best deserves it: it is most unworthy of God, to give him our feeble age, when Satan hath had the strength of our youth spent in his service: to give the *spirits* of the wine to Satan, and the *dregs* to God. *Nonne pudet te id temporis bona menti reservare, quod in nullam rem conferre potest?* saith *Seneca*: to give to God that time, which the infirmities of age makes useles for any thing else? Give me leave to make use of that of the Prophet *Malachy*, Will the Prince think you entertain a *crippled rebel*, who hath been all his dayes fighting against him under his enemies colours? Wilt thou give the best of thy life unto Satan, be under his service, and think to *list* thy self under Christs banner, to fight the *good fight* of faith, when thy strength and activity fails thee? *Tunc vivere incipere, cum desinendum est; & inde velle vitam inchoare, quod pauci produxerunt*, as the Heathen sayes: *Then to begin to live, when you should die, and so date your life from that time, to which the life but of a few is lengthned.* God, under the Law, would have no *blinde*, or *lame* for sacrifice, as in *Deut. 25. 21.* The *first-born* were holy to God: and he required not onely the *first-fruits*, but the *first* of those *first-fruits*, *Exod. 23. 19.* All which was to signifie unto us, that *young years* offered to God, are a *sweet-smelling savour* in his nostrils.

Mal. 1.8.

2 Consider, This is most for your *comfort*: that you may in time of age, affliction, and death, with peace and comfort reflect upon your youth, the mispence whereof does oft cause sad reflections of spirit in riper years, and fills the soul with horreur and amazement. *Job* was made to possess the *iniquities* of his youth: his youth had the pleasure of those sins, which his age now felt the smart of. When *guilt* shall lie in the face of an *awakened* conscience, and God for them shall exercise the soul with *inward* terrours, as *Job* describes the condition of a wicked man, *Job 20. 11. Pœnis quas sibi sceleribus adolescentia acquisivit*, sayes *Beza*, with those *punishments*, which are the issue of the sins of youth: nay, though God hath upon your repentance pardoned those sins, yet he may in old age chasten thee for them, then you may come sadly to speak that language, *Rom. 6. 21. What fruit have we in those sins, whereof we are now ashamed?* These questionless cost *David* many a sad tear, and mournful prayer, as we see in *Psal. 25. 7. Remember not*

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*the sins of my youth.* As it is in the *body*, licentious youth contracts those *distempers*, which are the burden and sorrow of *old age*, filling them with pains and aches: So it is in the *soul*, those *sins*, which by mispence of time youth rush into, may prove the sorrow and vexation of age: but *well-improved youth* makes age comfortable.

3. Consider, It will be an *Antidote* and *prevention* against those *sins*, which youth is most *liable* and *prone* to. Youth having less wisdom to discover, and less strength to resist and withstand temptation to sin, more open to solicitation by reason of unruly passions, bad examples, and counsel of others, is most liable to sin. *Where-with shall a young man cleanse his way?* saith David Psal. 119. 9. these being most subject to defilements: David answers the question, *By taking heed thereto according to thy word*, and one of the precepts of that word is *To redeem our time. Flee youthful lusts*, saies Paul to Timothy, 2 Tim. 2. 22. the flames of lust are most apt to enkindle by the heat of youth.

Horat. de  
Arte Poet.

—*Cereus in vitium flecti monitoribus asper*,  
So Horace, *Youth is wax to every impression of vice*: and the Poet gives you the reason of it.

*Queritur, Aegyptius quare sit factus adulter:*  
*In promptu causa est, desidiosus eras.*

It was his *idle mispence* of time which blew up and fomented the sparkes of lust for

*Otia si tollas perire Cupidinis arcus.*

4. Consider, It is your *gathering time*, and an age most capable of improvement: as *tender twigs*, most *flexible*, as *wax* fit for good impressions. Whereas, if this time be mispent, the *heart* grows hard through custome in sin, the *devil* gets stronger possession, the *memory* grows more unfaithful, the *understanding* weaker: God is provoked in a judicial way to take away your *gifts* and *parts* which you justly forfeit by a careless wrapping your *talents* in a *napkin*. The *Wise man* sends such sluggards to the Ant to learn wisdom: *She provideth her meat in summer*, Prov. 6. 8. So soon as the sun riseth the bee flies abroad to gather in her *honey*: in youth our parts are active and vigorous, therefore then *redeem your time*.

5. Consider, This will both *sweeten* and *facilitate* employment to you afterward. The *sins* of youth oft make men unserviceable in riper years, or if repented of and forsaken, yet they are oft a reproach and discouragement to men in their employments. *Ephraim* was ashamed, because she bore the reproach of her youth, Jer. 31. 19. S. Paul therefore writing to his young *Timothy* enformes him how to secure himself from contempt: *These things command and teach, &c*

so,



10. *Let no man despise thy youth,* 1 Tim. 4. 11, 12. Sins of youth lay men open to reproach, even then; when afterwards they prove eminent & serviceable in the work of God. Besides, mispence of youth must necessarily make our service and employment abroad more difficult: for men to have their seed to seek, when a harvest is expected from them: whereas your laborious improvement of this time makes service easy and familiar, when having laid up a treasure and stock of knowledge he is able, as the Scribe instructed to the kingdom of Heaven, *to bring out of his treasure things new and old.* Matth. 13. 52.

6. Redeem this time in conformity to Christ, and the best Saints. Christ was at twelve years of age about his Fathers business, Luk. 2. 44. Samuel in his childhood was dedicated to the Lord. 1. Sam. 1. 28. Timothy from a child redeemed his time to the study of the Scripture: 2 Tim. 3. 15. And it is recorded as a just commendation of that good Prince Josiah, that while yet young, he began so seek after the God of David his father, and at twelve years old zealously appeared against Idolatry. 2 Chron. 34. 3. Let us then tread in the footsteps of these Saints, and be followers of them, as they were of Christ, who redeemed his whole time to the service and glory of his Father.

II. The second rank of those who are most especially concerned in this is, such men as are of greater abilities and opportunities. To whom God gives ten talents, he expects an improvement from them, answerable to that they are intrusted with: the improvement of five will not serve for him, who hath received ten. To whom much is given, of him much shall be required, Luc. 12. 48. Mens great gifts and parts are ready to puff them up with pride: S. Paul was in danger of this 2 Cor. 12. 8. and this is the abuse of the gifts of God, which, if rightly used and improved, should not leaven us with pride, but engage & quicken us to more serviceableness for God, and not censuring the gifts of others (by which practise we either charge God for giving them no more, or sacrifice sacrilegiously to our selves, that we have so much, when as we have nothing, but what is received) endeavour to improve, and use our own.

III. The third rank: such, who by idleness and looseness have mispent much time formerly: The Apostle Peter urgeth this. 1 Pet. 4. 2, 3. The later any of us have come into the vineyard, the harder must we labour to get our work done before the evening of our daies, when our account is to be made. As the Merchant, (to which I told you the expression *εργαζομενοι* was an allusion) who comes when the mart is ready to break up, he will hasten his traffick, and double his diligence, so a traveller that oversleeps himself

in the morning, will be upon the spur all the day after, that he may come to his journey's end in time: so should those who have loitered and idled away much of their time formerly, now with the more earnestness press towards the mark, and run the race that is set before them.

Hom. II. 2.

**IV.** Those who are engaged in special service for God: such as *Magistrates and Ministers*. Of the first you know what the Poet saith, *ἡ πόλις ἡμετέρα καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ βασιλεία ἀνδρά, ὁ μαγίστρατος οὐκ ὀψοῖται ὅλην νύκτα*, A Magistrate must not sleep a whole night: but the other is more considerable; we must be labourers, not loiterers in Gods vineyard: as they are described *Heb. 13. 17.* *αὐτοὶ ὡς ἡμεῖς*, the word signifies, *Nobles in somnes agere*, as they that watch. S. Paul was *ὡς ἀγωνιστὴς*, in these watchings often, *2 Cor. 6. 5.* Diligence and labour is commendable in any; but in none more, then in a Minister of the Gospel. The Priest under the law had the *shoulder* in the sacrifice, to intimate *that burden and labour*, which lay upon him. See what employment S. Paul puts upon his young Timothy, *1 Tim. 4. 13, 14.* *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, &c.* And if you consider duly that exact *Scripture-knowledge*, and in order to that, the knowledge of *languages, arts and sciences*, to qualify a man for that employment, together with the end of it, the *concernment of souls*: (and add the danger of negligence in this work, God having pronounced him cursed, *Jerem. 48. 10.* and that *those souls shall be required at our hands*, who perish through our negligence, *Ezek. 3. 18.* as *Judah* stood engaged for Benjamin, so *Ministers* for souls: God will require, God will require an account of them from them;) you will easily conclude it *their interest* more especially then others, to *redeem this time*.

Gen 43. 9.

**V.** Those especially are engaged, who live in these places, and that not *only* because we have greater opportunities (of which before) but chiefly because our *improvements* are the *interest and concernment* both of Church and State. All mens eyes are fixt upon us, and their expectations are from us, and therefore we must *redeem our time*, that we may be a credit to our places, and a blessing unto the Church, and be able by our serviceableness, when God calls us out, to give an account of the expence of our time here, by contending for the faith against all novel encroachments of error, heresie, and the like.

**VI.** And lastly, Those especially, who have had experience of the *grace of God*, who are truly enlightened, and brought home unto Christ. And therefore you may observe, that the Apostle urgeth this duty upon the *Ephesians*, from the consideration of their regenerate condition, *Ephes. 5. 8.* *Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light*

in



in the Lord; therefore it follows, walk as children of the light; and having again said at ver. 14. *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee the light;* it follows in ver. 15. *walk circumspectly, not as fools (as formerly, mispending, and lavishing out your precious time) but as wise;* and that hath reference to this, *Redeeming your time.* So the Apostle elsewhere frequently argues from the change of our state and condition, to the change of our conversation: so Rom. 13. 11. *And thus knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer: and at verse 12. The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light, &c.* However men sleep in the night, yet when the Sun riseth, man goeth forth unto his labour; so however men idle in the night of their unregenerate, when the Sun of righteousness is risen upon them, then they must up and be working. Observe again, how the Apostle urges this in 1 Thess. 5. 5, 6. *Ye are all children of the light, and of the day, we are not of the night, nor of the darkness: Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch, & be sober.* And therefore Paul himself, that had wickedly mispent his time, in persecuting of the Church, and blaspheming God, when once he was brought home, desires to improve it for God: and therefore calls out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* and this briefly upon these considerations, which I do but touch, and leave to your selves to be enlarged.

Psalm 104. 23.

Acts. 9. 16.

Ecc. cl. 12. 1.

1. *They have more to improve than others.* They have not onely common gifts, but a talent of special grace, which they should trade with, and endeavour to improve.

2. *They have the greatest mercie to engage them.* The Wiseman urges it upon some, in consideration of the great work of creation, *Remember thy Creatour in the days of thy youth:* how much more should an interest in the work of redemption wrought by Christ engage unto this? he having redeemed us to this end, that we might redeem our time for his service, Luke 1. 74.

3. *They have the greatest hopes in their eyes to encourage them.* Consider, how laborious and diligent he will be, who hath the obtaining of a kingdome in his eyes: and should not Christians much more, eyeing their inheritance incorruptible, and that kingdome, which fadeth not away: For which cause, saith the Apostle, we faint not, &c. 2 Cor. 4. 16. but upon what ground? because we know that he, which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, verse 14. and; we look not at the things which are seen, which are but temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal, verse 18.

4. *They are best able to judge of the pretiousness of time, and*  
how

how much it is their concernment to improve it, they having the glory of God, and their own salvation in their eye; they know what the mispence of time means, it hath been the burden of their spirit, and the sadness of their souls; they know and see into the danger of lavishing out their time, which others, who discern none of these, prodigally throw away.

5. And lastly, Their *mis-improvement* of time is the greatest scandal unto others. Every one is apt to take offence at, and encourage themselves in looseness by, the remissness and idleness of those, who own Christ, and profess the Gospel. *When my foot slippereth, saith David, they magnifie themselves against me.* So the Apostle tels us of the Jews, *Rom. 2. 24. that the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them.* And, how apt are men to take an occasion by our idleness to reproach Learning, and Religion too? The Apostle therefore, with whom I shall conclude the Doctrinal part of these words, exhorts, *Walk in wisdom towards them that are without, Redeeming the time, Coloss. 4. 5.*

Psal. 38. 16.

4 General Application.

Epist. 1.

Fourthly, The improvement of this by some Application. And the Application of this shall be onely twofold.

1. To check and reprove mens mispence, and mis-improvement of their time. Nothing more precious, yet nothing less regarded: may we not complain of many, who profess themselves Christians, as Seneca does of the Heathens; *Magna pars vita male agentibus, maxima nihil agentibus, tota aliud agentibus dilabatur.* We hold our time of God, as our great Landlord, and how are most like to bad Tenants, who return little or no homage to him for it: but improve Gods talents in the devils service. *Quem mihi dabis, saith Seneca, qui aliquod temporis pretium ponat, qui diem aestimat: Where shall we finde a man, who sets a due value, and estimate upon his time?* What between doing nothing, and that which is worse then nothing, sin, most mens time slips away. I onely suggest unto you this; Time will have an end speedily, and what will you do, when God calls to an account of that time which you have spent upon your lusts, and though it may seem to have been pleasant, yet without repentance it will be very sad: even as it fared with those jolly ones, in *Job 21. 12, 13. They take the timbrel, and harp, and rejoyce at the sound of the organ. They spend their dayes in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave: and well were it for them, if they might rest there; but it will be more horrible, as in verse 30 of that chapter, The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction, they shall be brought forth unto the day of wrath.*

2. To quicken us to a conscientious performance of this duty by a laborious improvement of our time. This the Apostle presses, 1.

Theff.



*Theff. 4. 11. That ye study to be quiet, and do your own business: and again in 2 Theff. 3. 10, 11. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat: For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, and idle. Disorderly walking, especially in mispending, and mis-improving our time, is very unsuitable to a Christian. I shall therefore shew you briefly, to what end, and how you should improve your time conscientiously, and so dismiss the Text. It must be done,*

I. To the glory of God: *Whatsoever you do, saith the Apostle, do all to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10. 31. Did we consider this in the improving our time in our studies, and ask our selves this question, Can God have any glory from this kinde of studie? It would certainly cut off the study of many unprofitable, impertinent, idle books, which inable men onely for some idle frothy discourse, to the dishonour of the great God, Time is Gods creature, and his talent, therefore to be imployed onely to his glory.*

II. To the good of others. So the Apostle expressly, *Gal. 6. 10. While we have time, let us do good unto all. That Romane Emperour set a just estimate upon his time, who accounted that day lost, in which he had done no good unto some. This concerns those especially, who are intrusted with the care of others. Titus Vespasian was wont to say, *Hodie non imperavi, quia nemini benefici: a speech worthy of an Emperour, whose chief care should be for the publick good; so should we also, who are entrusted with the care of others, account that day mis-spent, in which we have not endeavored some way to better them, Ut non negligant opportunitatem lucrificandi errantes, incredulos, inter quos vivebant, sayes Musculus: so also the Apostle exhorts, Coloss. 4. 5. Walk wisely to them that are without, redeeming the time.**

III. To our own salvation, neglecting no opportunity whereby we may promote it, willingly engaging in every dutie and practise, which hath a tendencie to it: thus *working out our salvation with fear and trembling. But withall we must observe, that this must be done,*

I. Presently, lest it be too late. As *Thales* being solicited to marrie when young, answered *too early, It is too soon; when old, in an answer, It is too late: so many, who have thought much too soon to dedicate themselves to God, in their age have sadly in the despair of their spirit cryed out, It is too late: let us resolve therefore as Elihu in Job, If I have done iniquity, I will do no more, that is, in mispending, and mis-improving our time, but in the present redeeming of it. It is one of the master-pieces of Satan, to destroy soules, by tempting them to defer and delay the improvement of their time, suggesting*

unto

Phil. 2. 12.

Job 24. 32.

Lam. 3. 27.

Aug. Confess.  
lib. 8. cap. 5.

Senec. ep. 12.

Calv. in loc.

unto them, *It will be time enough afterward*: thus the yong Gallant is perswaded to spend his time in pride, and vanity, till he hath none left to pray, repent, and return in. As a cunning usurer flatters his debtour, tells him *all will be well*, till he hath failed his day, and then seizes on his land: so Satan flatters men into security, perswades them that they have day enough before them, till they have sinned away their day of grace, so God is provoked at last to give them up to that master, whom they have served all their time, to receive their wages in eternity of misery. Cursed be that Proverb, *A young Saint, an old Devil*: you do not oft see young Devils prove old Saints. Solomon gives better advice, *Prov. 22. 6. Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will never depart from it*: and the Prophet *Jeremiah. It is good for a man, that he bear the yoke in his youth*, the yoke of obedience, as well as of affliction. Let me reason then with you, as *S. Augustine* did sometimes with himself, *Quam diu cras & cras, quare non hodie? Modo & Modo non habent modum*. We should redeem every day, as if it were our last. *Ille beatissimus est, & sui securus possessor, qui crastinum sine solitudine expectat: Quisquis dixit vixi, quotidie ad lucrum surget*, saith *Seneca*. We should without anxiety or solicitude expect a morrow, and with diligence and conscience improve to day. *To day*, while it is called to day, if ye will hear his voice &c. *Hebr. 3. 15.*

2. *Resolvedly*, lest you be hindered: you will meet with many impediments, much difficulty, and many temptations to mispend your time, we need therefore take up a resolution to go through: so long as there is a Devil and a world without, and flesh within, we must expect to meet with impediments in every religious way; but we ought in the strength of God to resolve against them, to avoid, and encounter them. *Eccles. 11. 4. He that observeth the wind, shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap*, and he that makes difficulty an argument against duty, shall never perform any. Difficulties should make a Christian more diligent and watchfull, not more secure, and careless. *Solomon* marks him for a sluggard, that pretends a lion in the way, why he should not go forward, *Prov. 22. 13. Cum ita corruptum est seculum, videtur diabolus tyrannidem occupare, ut non possit tempus Deo consecrari, nisi quodammodo redemptum*, so *Calvin*. *Daniel* would redeem his time for prayer, though he knew for certain, he should be cast into the den of lions: and the three children would not worship the golden image, though they knew a fiery furnace, beat seven times hotter then ordinary, was provided for them: nor the Apostles desist from preaching though they knew they were sure to suffer for it: and not onely so, but they rejoyce that they could redeem their time at this rate, *Acts 14. 18, 19.* You may perhaps



perhaps meet with contempt, *David* was the *song of the drunkards*; you cannot *dance before the Ark of God*, but you shall have a *scoffing Michal*; be loaded with reproaches, as *S. Paul* was, who yet gloried in them; you must remember to go through all *resolvedly*, to *redeem your time* to God. The *Primitive Christians* bought this time with the *price of their blood*, that they might *consecrate it to God*. *S. Paul* would go up to *Jerusalem*, to preach the Gospel, though his life lay at stake for it, *I am ready not onely to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem*, Acts 21. 13.

Plal. 69. 12.  
2 Sam. 6. 16.  
2 Cor. 12. 10.

3. *Perseveringly*, lest you be turned back. It is one of Satans methods in his temptations, when Christians have been performing duties, especially if with *freedom and enlargement*, to tempt them after that to *remit of their watch*, and be *secure*, and so gets advantage over them: we must not make the *improvement of one day* an argument of *mispending the next*, but lay out *every day* by labour and diligence. It will be the privilege of Saints in heaven, that they *rest from their labours*; while they are here, they must *work and work out their salvation with fear and trembling*: they will find constantly *much work to do*; *old corruptions to mortifie*; *sins to repent of*, and *pray against*; *graces to act and increase*; *gifts to be stirred up*; *comforts to be maintain'd and upheld*; *personal and relative duties to be performed*; *general and particular callings to be attended*; *several relations to be filled up*: and this will take up our time here, if seriously remembered.

Rev. 14. 13.  
Phil. 2. 12.

But do you allow (some may say) *no time for Recreations*? Yes, so they be not too *expensive of time*, but *enablements to our particular services*.

*No time for enjoyment of friends*? Yes, *much*, and by that you may best *redeem your time*, by discourses to the edifying and building up of one another in your *most holy faith*. *What no time for secular employments*? Yes, *employment in thy calling is redeeming thy time*: and if thou doest not so employ thy calling, as therein to *provide for thine own*, thou art worse then an *infidel*, 1 Tim. 5. 8. I speak onely of *lavishing out your time in the service of sin*. And therefore, to draw to a conclusion, Remember, that if he, that wrapped up his *talent in a napkin*, was *cast, as an unprofitable servant*, into *utter darkness*, as it is *Matth. 25*. vvhhat place in everlasting burnings shall be laid out for them, who *lavish out their talents in the service of their lusts*, and *sacrifice their time constantly unto the devil*, and the world? But he that *improves his time, and talents*, though never so *small*, shall be rewarded by God with a most ample and everlasting reward: for, *Blessed is that servant, whom his Master, when he cometh, shall finde so doing*.

Jude, v. 20.

Matth. 24.  
46.





THE  
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The GROUNDS and REASONS  
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under the means of  
GRACE;

Together with the suitable remedies and cures,  
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By JOHN FROST, B. D. late  
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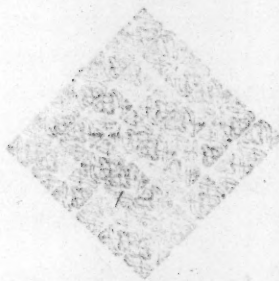


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HEB. 4. 2.

ΟΥΚ ΩΦΕΛΗΣΕΝ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ

ΤΗΣ ΑΚΟΗΣ ΕΚΕΙΝΟΥΣ

*The word preached did not profit them.*



Uther lays this down as the character of a good Divine, To be able rightly to distinguish between Law and Gospel. *Qui bene norit discernere Evangelium à Lege, gratias agat Deo; & sciat se esse Theologum.* Upon this account sure, they are bad ones who confine the Gospel to the times of, and after Christ, as if the Jews before Christ had been wholly under a Covenant of works, having Law only without any Gospel preached to them: an assertion which the discovery of that *πρωτοεισαγγελιον*, Gen. 3. 15. of the seed of the woman, the prophecies, types, and sacrifices sufficiently evince to be false and unsound; but we need go no further for a confutation of this error, then the words immediately before my Text, where the Apostle speaking of the Jews in the wilderness, tells us they were *ευηγγελισμένοι*, evangelized, or gospelled as well as we now, *et infuit et idem Evangelium*, saith Camero, the same Doctrine for substance, though not for clearness of Revelation, which the Apostle takes notice of, as the chief privilege of the Jew above the Gentile, Rom. 3. 2. and this as their glory, that to them did belong the covenants and the promises, Rom. 9. 4. and the Psalmist as a distinctive privilege to the Jew, Psal. 147. 19, 20. A promise they had of entering Canaan as typically of their everlasting rest; but they fell short of it through unbelief, Heb. 3. 19. The Gospel was preached to them, but because of unbelief, being not mixed with faith, it became unprofitable to them, *Ουκ ωφελισεν ο λογος της ακουης εκεινους*, saith the Text.

A little for Explication. *Λογος της ακουης.* ] We translate it, *the word preached*; it is fully, and so in your margins, *the word of hearing*, which briefly hints and suggests these two things,

First, *Most worthy to be heard.* Whether we consider the author of it, God himself; or the excellency of the things revealed, Christ, and Salvation by him; or the excellent end of the word of God, which is to make us perfect in every good work, and wise unto

Fabritius, loc.  
Com. Luth.  
pag. 82.

3 Tim. 3.  
15, 17.

**Clemens, p. 27.** *salvation*, the word being ἐσώσας ζωὴς αἰδίου, as *Clemens* calls it: as the *manna* to the *Israelites*; our *viaticum* to our heavenly *Canaan*. Others may be heard in their time and place, *Plato*, and *Aristotle*, *Aquinas*, and *Austin*: I think they are too severe and mo-ose, who think these not worth lending an ear too. The *Gibeonites* may draw water to the *Sanctuary*; the *Egyptian pearls* may enrich the *Israelites*; the *Gentiles* may be afforded an *outward room* in the *Court* of the *Temple*. There is certainly excellent use of the *Fathers* of the *Church*, to evidence the consent of *truth* and *unity* in several ages; and if ever to be listened to, in this age, (wherein we have almost lost the truth in a crowd of errors) wherein yet they are most neglected. To me, next to *Scripture-evidence*, *universal consent* (if there be such a thing to be found) seems the most cogent for embracing doctrines of faith; we should especially attend to what the *Spirit saith unto the Churches*. But others may be listened to, so they be cited without affectation and vain-glory. *S. Paul* was resolved against coming to his *Corinthians* with enticing words of *mans wisdom*, as desiring to know himself, and preach to others *nothing but Christ*, and *him crucified*: yet himself hath adopted more then one of the expressions of the *Heathens* into *Scripture*; and especially, when he preached at *Athens*, cited one of their own Poets, *Act. 17. 28*. But all others are *onely* to be heard, as they conform to the word of *God*, which is λόγος τῆς ἀληθείας, as *most worthy* to be heard. That's the first.

**Revel. 2. 7.**

**Psal. 19. 8, 9.**  
**Clemens, p. 30.**

**Isa. 57. 19.**

Secondly, As *most necessary* to be heard; and that both in respect of *Divine command*, and in reference to *our own good*, for our *illumination*: for as *Clemens* saith, ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ λόγῳ, so is the world, so is the soul without the light of the word of *God*, notwithstanding all the *star-light* of other knowledge. So necessary for the begetting and increasing faith, it is εὐχρηστὸς τῆς πίστεως, *Gal. 3. 2*; and the *Apostle* makes it an impossibility in an ordinary way, to believe without hearing, *Rom. 10. 14*. πῶς ἠκούσονται; How shall they believe? that is, ordinarily they cannot. So again necessary for the begetting and upholding the comforts through the *Spirit*, creating the fruits of the lips peace. In a word necessary, as the fiery pillar to guide us to our heavenly *Canaan*: for τὸ πνεῦμα ζωῆς, *Acts 5. 20*. the word of life; λόγος τῆς σωτηρίας, *Acts 13. 26*. the Gospel of salvation, *Ephes. 1. 13*. Necessary for our spiritual strength and growth; the want of it is compared to a *famine*. What weak bodies have men in a *famine*? what starved souls under the want of the word of *God*? so as it is *most worthy of hearing* in itself; so *most necessary* to be heard in respect of us. It is λόγος τῆς ἀληθείας, οὐκ ὠφέλησεν, It did not profit; that is, not truly and savingly.



ly. From this exposition you may easily prevent me in your thoughts, in what must be the subject of my discourse, viz. *unprofitableness under the means of grace, the preaching of the Gospel.*

In speaking to which, lest (as it was said of *Diogenes*, that he trampled upon *Plato's* pride, but *majori cum fastu*,) I should preach unprofitably, whilst I speak against *unprofitableness* under preaching; I shall confine my self to this plain, practical, and (I hope) profitable Doctrine.

The generalitie, or most of those who hear the word, do not truly and savingly profit by it. A truth, which they that run may read in the experience of this present age; in which (I think, I may say it without any dishonourable reflexion upon the former, or pride of present times) the Gospel was never more frequently, or powerfully preached; yet how little profit by it. I call to witness the profanation of *Sabbaths*, *noon-day-sins*, neglect of ordinances, contempt of *Ministers*, those monstrous *Sects* and *Heresies*, those outrages and that profaneness, which prevails amongst us; which might justly astonish and amaze us, did not this lessen the wonder, that from the first preaching of the Gospel it hath been so. At the first dawning of the Gospel, in that promise of the seed of the woman to break the serpents head, yet *Cain* a murderer: Afterward *Noah* was a preacher of righteousness, yet the old world remain ungodly. *Isaiah* complaineth, who hath believed our report? Descend to our Saviours times, there you finde Christ himself preaching, the *Pharisees* deriding him, *Luke* 16. 14. In the Apostles times, *Paul* preached Christ at *Athens*, and there he is accounted a babler, and a setter forth of strange gods, *Acts* 17. 18. Again, he preacheth to a company of women, and onely *Lydia's* heart's opened, *Acts* 16. 14. *Simon* heard the word, and yet remained in the gall of bitterness, *Acts* 8. 23. And the Apostle applies the Prophets complaint to Gospel-times, Lord, who hath believed our report? *Rom.* 10. 16. The Word is compared to meat; but the richest fare will not make some men fat and thriving: to seed; yet you know in the Parable *Mat.* 13. 3. but one of those four grounds, into which it was cast, was good, and brought forth fruit, *verse* 23. So, though this seed of the Word was sown in *Jerusalem* by the hand, yea, and watered too by the tears of her Saviour, yet she remained fruitless and barren, and at Christs second coming, he shall finde iniquity abounding, charitie cold, and scarce faith on the earth, *Matthew* 24. 12.

In prosecution of which Doctrine I shall shew,

First, What it is savingly to profit by the Word.

Secondly, The grounds and reasons of most mens unprofitableness under the Word.

Third-

Doctrine.

1 Pet. 2. 5.  
Ila. 53. 1.

Luke 19. 41.

Thirdly, Apply it in two words, one to the *Minister*, and the other to the *people*.

I. *Partic.*

For the first :

In this it is necessarie to speak distinctly, thereby to correct those common mistakes whereby most men do dangerously delude themselves. One *remembers* the Text; a second picks a *flower* of Rhetorick; a third runs away with a *notion*; a fourth *admires* the preacher; a fifth gets a little floating *head-knowledge*; a sixth makes a few formal *resolutions*; a seventh is somewhat *moved* and *affected* at a Sermon; another lastly *praiseth* the *quaintness* and *elegancie* of the preacher: and each of these thinks himself abundantly *profited* by the Word.

It is then,

1 Tim. 6. 5.

I. Not to *profit* and *advantage* a mans self in *the world* by the profession and constant hearing of the Word: though this be all the profit they look after, *who count gain godliness*. Men care for the Gospel no longer then it is consistent with their wordly advantages, who when they come to serve God in attendance upon his word, secretly sacrifice to the Idol *Self*, and propound no more to themselves, then *secular* advantages. *Quantas nobis divitias comparavit hac fabula Christi?* as *Leo* the tenth was oft heard to say. Men may esteem the Gospel but a *Fable*, and yet adhere to it for *outward* advantages; care not for *Diana*, but her *silver-shrines*; that affect not the Gospel so much, as that *respect* and *profit* it brings them in. That this is the temper of many, is evident from this; that if the world solicites *Demas*, he forsakes *Paul*; the Scribe cares not for following Christ, though he professed zealously, when once he understood he had not where to *lay his head*; and many such followers we have, like those, *John* 6. 26. who followed Christ, not for *love* to his *person* or *doctrine*, but for the gain of the *loaves*.

2 Tim. 4. 10.  
Mar. 8.

II. Not to *admire* or *praise* the *preacher*. The Church is not a *Theater*, but a *Market*; and it is not a *plaudite* that's expected from you, to close the Sermon with a *humme*; but that you should be trading here for spiritual merchandize; that you may go from hence richer in *faith*, and more encreased in all *grace*. *Ezekiel's* preaching was to the Jews as a very *pleasant song*, yet they profited not by it, for they did not *practise*, but their hearts went after their *covetousness*, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32. So oft as you *approve* the *Preacher* and his *Doctrine*, and do not so *profit* as to *practise* it, you are self-condemned, and guiltie in the judgement of your own consciences.

III. Not *onely* to be enlightned by the Word. I know *spiritual*



tual illumination is the first work of the Spirit by the Word, where it savingly profits; S. Paul was sent to the Gentiles first to open their eyes: but that which I here assert is, that there may much common illumination be wrought by the Word of God, where it doth not savingly profit. It is most evident from Heb. 6. 6. where we read of some who were once enlightened, yet in a possibilitie to Apostatize, and fall away, and that beyond the renewing to repentance, so consequently of salvation. And indeed, this illumination is one requisite in the unpardonable sin, it must be after the knowledge of the truth, Heb. 10. 26. A man may have his head full of the word of God, and be never the better for it. Simon Magus was wrought into an historical belief by the preaching of Philip, yet not savingly profited by it, but stil remained in the gall of bitterness, Acts 8. 13, 23. A man may be enlightened to know, and to discourse of the Word of God, and yet not savingly profited by it.

IV. Not barely to be affected and delighted with the Word of God. This may arise not from the efficacy of the Word, but from the sublimity of the truths contained in it. For truth, the more sublime it is, the greater delight it bringeth with it; but this is neither solid nor lasting: those who receive the seed into stony places, were such as heard and received the word with joy, but they were but *as straw*; Matth. 13. 20, 21. it lasted but for a while. The night of persecution damps his joy, and he turns Apostate. Ezekiel's preaching was to the Jews as a well-tuned instrument in the place fore-quoted; Herod heard John Baptist gladly, Mark 6. 20. Those we spake of before, Heb. 6. 6. had tasted of the good word of God, that is, found some relish and delight in it, and of the heavenly gift, and the power of the world to come; all which from verse 9. appear not to be saving gifts. For the Authour there tells those to whom he wrote, that he hoped better things of them, and such as accompany salvation; whence it is obvious to collect, that those whom he had mentioned in the fore-going verses, were not sanctifying, but common gifts of the Spirit of God, amongst which is this light, superficial taste, and relish of the Word of God, which may arise either from our affection to the Preacher, or from some common work of the Spirit of God. As the hearers of John, Joh. 5. 35. rejoiced for a season, yet, vers. 38. had not the word abiding in them.

V. Not barely to be wrought upon by the Word, to reform some gross sin, or to comply with a partial, outward, obedience unto God; for thus Herod when he heard John Baptist *did many things*, Mark 6. 20. he did many things. Gross sin spoils truth, gross interest, rack conscience; and upon these motives a man may forsake them, and yet not savingly profit by the Word of God. A man may hear,

and practise much of what he hears, the Word powerfully awakening natural conscience, and stirring up, and closing with the dictates of it, till it comes to some *darling-bosome-lust*; and then the word proves *ineffectual*. Herod hears John Baptist gladly, till he came to his *Herodias*; the *young-man* brags of an *universal* obedience to the *commands* of Christ, till he comes to his *covetousness*, and prescribes him to sell all. A man may in part be *outwardly* reformed by the Word of God, and yet not *inwardly* renewed, and so not *savingly* profited. So much *negatively*: I shall not lead you far for a *positive* resolution.

The word then profits, when 'tis *mixed*, a *mixed* word: that speaks a three-fold reference.

First, To seed.

Secondly, To meat.

Thirdly, To Physick.

Seed must be *mixt* with the soil, and with the dew and rain from heaven, or else it will not *spring*. Meat must be *mixed* with the stomach, or else it will not *nourish*. Physick must *mix* with the humour, or else it will not *cure*. When, in *analogie* to all these, the word is *mixed*, then it may be said *savingly* to profit. And first as *seed*.

I. When the word of God is rooted in the heart. This is the seed mixing with the soil, it is not seed kept in your barn, or granaries, or cast superficially on the earth, that will grow and increase; it is not the word of God scattered upon the ear, or laid up in your heads, or in your paper-books; but treasured up in your hearts which will *savingly* profit, therefore God promisseth this to his people, *Jer. 31. 33.*

The reason why the seed thrived not upon the stony ground, was because it had no root, *Matth. 13. 21.* It is but *sowing* in the air, if the Word takes not root in the heart. As it is said of Mary, she kept all Christ's sayings in her heart, *Luke 21. 51.* The *Wiseman* requires, *Prov. 2. 1.* that we should *hide his commandments with us*. *Ka. 2. 20.* Faith *Clemens*; as seed in the earth, which he calls *spirituall ingrafting*; the graft must be mixed with the stock, if it *thrives*; the seed with the earth if it *springs*; the word with the heart, if it *profits*, as it were incorporated.

II. When it *fructifies* in the life. As the seed did in the good ground, *Matth. 13.* And this is consequent upon the former, if it takes root downward, it will spring upward. It is a dangerous *deceit*, many are under, who satisfy themselves with a bare hearing of the Word, and never look to the fruit of it in their lives. It may fructifie diversly, as the good seed did, in some an *hundred*, in some

sixty,



sixty, in some thirty; but it argues the seed *lost*; if it doth not fructifie in some measure.

III. When *mixed* with the dew of heaven. Though the seed be good, and the husbandman skilfull and laborious, yet there must be influence and dew of heaven, or else no fruitfulness. The Word may be good, the Minister laborious in season, and out of season. Paul may plant, but 'tis God must give the increase. *Adjumenta doctrina tunc profunt anima adhibita per hominem, cum Deus operatur ut profint*, is Austin's Divinity, cap. 16. lib. 4. *De Doctrina Christiana*. The manna which descended to feed the Israelites, came down with dew; so when the dew of Gods grace and blessing descends with the manna of the word.

1 Cor. 3. 6.

Exod. 16.

Secondly, As meat. I. When it *abides* with us. Meat profiteth not, except it be detain'd in the stomach; which is done oft, when the stomach is weak, by mixing something with it: so the Word of God then profits, when 'tis retain'd in the heart: that will be when *admiscetur dono fidei*, saith Camero on the Text. Unbeleif is a throwing up of Spiritual nourishment again: faith retains and digests it. Let the word of God, saith the Apostle, dwell in you richly, Colossians, 3. 16. Thus the word profited David; Psal. 119. 11. Thy word, saies he, have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.

II. When it *assimulates*. So it is in meat; Onely with this difference, that the meat is assimilated into the likeness of the bodie that receives it, and is nourished by it: but our souls must be assimilated to that word which they receive, and by which they are spiritually nourished. When we are delivered into the mould, and formed into the image of the Word (Rom. 6. 17. *ἵνα ὡς κατασκευάσθητε τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ λόγου*, into which you were delivered) framed as mettall in a mould, into the likeness of the Word of God; then we profit by the word; and when, as the Apostle saith, we beholding as in a glass the mirrour of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory, &c. 2 Cor. 3. 18.

III. When it *nourisheth*. This is consequent upon the former, the Word then profits, when it is not onely as an immortal seed to beget us; but a spiritual food to nourish us, when as new-born babes we grow by the sincere milk of the Word; when we grow in knowledge and in grace; not onely in high-flown notions, and ecstasical raptures, but grow inwardly, and vitally. To grow in the head, while the vitals decay, is, you know, the symptome of a disease: a Christian then profits, when by the Word he grows more active in faith, more fervent in charity, which are the vitals of Religion.

1 Pet. 1. 23.

Ibid. 2. 2.

Thirdly, As Physick. I. When it *searcheth*. As when Physick mixeth and meets with the humour, it gripes and puts the patient

Acs 24. 52.

to pains; so the Word of God, when it meets with our *corruption* and *searcheth* it, it *gripes* and pains the soul. So did *Peters Sermon*, when it met with the particular corruption of the Jews of *crucifying* Christ, it *pricked them at the heart*, Acts 2. 37. When *Pauls* discourse meets with a *Felix's injustice* and *intemperance*, it gripes him so, that he *trembles*. That *Physick* works not *kindly*, which doth not make the *patient* sick: The Word of God then operates *kindly*, when it makes the *soul* sick of sin. But this is not enough therefore,

II. When it *purgeth* and *heals*. And to this end, it must be *mixed* too. As there must be due *ingredients* in every *potion*, suitably designed for the Cure of each disease: so there must be in the Word of God; and this requires much spiritual skill in the Minister, the *spiritual* physician. Some are *lethargical* in *security*, these must have the *corrosives* of *threatnings*: Others *fainting* in *despondencies* & *fears*, these must have the *cordials* of the *promises*: others *paralytical*, weak in their *graces*, these must be brought to the *bath* of the *bloud* of Christ to *strengthen* them. There is a *healing* vertue in the Word of God, whence perhaps it is that the Scripture is called, *ἡ ὁρμή τοῦ λόγου*, the *form of sound Words*, 2 Tim. 1. 13. *efficiently*, as *making sound*, and this must be added to the former; for the Word oft *convinceth* where it *converteth* not, (as the most obstinate sinner sometimes): The *incision's* made, but they run away from the *Physitian* before they are *bound up*, and so are not *healed*. *Conviction* is no more *conversion*, then *lancing* a wound is the *healing* of it: then *Physick* is the *cure*. So you have seen briefly what it is to *profit by the Word of God*.

2. Partic.

Secondly, The grounds of unprofitableness may be drawn from five heads.

I. The Preacher.

II. The Hearer.

III. The Word it self.

IIII. God.

V. Satan.

From each of these we may take an account, why the Word profits not the generality of men.

I. The Minister. For I think he cannot plead not guilty in this particular. But as *Diozenes*, when he saw a loose scholar to be beaten, charged the *Master*; so when we see so many *unprofitable hearers*, we may in a great measure charge and blame the *Preacher*, and that in these ten respects,

First, Many preach *unsent*; run before they have their *errand*; thrust into the office without a *Commission*; and that I confidently

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ly affirm to be one reason why the Word profits so little.

It might seem a digression from the Text, but I am sure not impertinent to the times, if I should enter a discourse of the necessity of a lawful call, in order to the preaching of the word, and to enquire whether to preach without it be not a neglect of a divine ordinance and institution, a closing with and gratifying the Papist and Socinian, a contradicting the universal practise of the Church, a violating the rule, of prudence, order, and right reason, a prostrating the authority and exposing the function to contempt, and laying it open to the presumption of every pretender to gifts. But I shall onely at present in all submission propound these two Queries as to the point in hand, and wholly submit them to your judgement.

1. Whether he, who preacheth without a lawful call and Commission, can pray in faith for a blessing on what he preacheth, as an ordinance of God in reference to the end of preaching, which is Conversion of souls? If he can, he must have some promise to ground that faith and prayer upon, which the Scripture, I dare say, affords not; nay, God saith the contrary of those Prophets, Jer. 23. 32. *I sent them not, nor commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all:* and if it be said these were false Prophets who prophesied lies, I wish it were not the case of our pretenders, who are generally broachers of some gross error; But however it is to be observed, that their not profiting is not charged upon the falsity of their Doctrine, but their want of sending, and being commissioned to the office. An Ambassador is not like to treat effectually on terms of peace, if he neglects his Commission: no more are those who negotiate upon termes of reconciliation of sinners to God, who run without sending.

2. Whether for the people to expect profit by such, be not to look for Gods blessing out of Gods way? That Scripture is expresse Rom. 10. 14. where if the Apostles gradation were rational it must argues a necessary dependance of preaching upon sending, as of hearing upon preaching, as of faith upon hearing, viz. all in an ordinary way of Gods dispensation. Not to limit God, but that he may work by extraordinary means, but for us to expect them, when we may have ordinary means according to divine institution to patronize encourage disorder in the Church and plainly to tempt God; No Manna in Canaan where you may plow and sow: No depending on extraordinary workings (and such must the profit by unsent preachers be, if ever it be) where God affords us ordinary means of our spiritual proficiency.

Till I can satisfie my self in these two doubts, I must resolve the unprofitableness of the Word into the preaching unsent. And pardon me if any think otherwise here, though I wish that learned

*Chernit. in  
loc. pag. 129.*

*Chernitius* conclude this to be good Divinity, *Ecclesia non debent, nec possunt cum fructu audire eos, qui non habent legitima vocationis testimonia.* As you then intend to profit by the word, practise our Saviours command, *Matth. 9. 38. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send labourers into his harvest.*

*Ephel. 3. 14.  
1. Cor. 3. 6.*

Secondly, *The Ministers neglect of private prayer that the word may profit.* A duty certainly much incumbent on the dispensers of the Word of God, in reference to the spiritual advantage of the people; for this cause *Paul bowed his knee to God for his Ephesians.* The hearers profit ought to be the Preachers aim, which he cannot effect without God; he may plant, but 'tis God must give the increase. It is the Lord, which teacheth us to profit; and no more effectual applications of our selves to God, then by prayer. *Paul*, we know, was rapt up into the third heaven, *ut ad Apostolatium suum instructioni rediret*, saith *Musculus*: so should every Minister, by holy meditation and devout prayer, if he will be a profitable preacher of the Gospel. *Austin* tels us, that a Minister may profit more, *pietate orationis, quam oratorum facultate*, by the piety of his devotion, then by an affected laborious studied eloquence: and therefore goes and adviseth every Minister; by praying for himself and his people; to be orator *antequam dictor*, to be a solicitor at the throne of grace, before an orator in the pulpit, that, *priusquam exerat proferentem linguam, ad Deum elevet sitientem animam*; he should first breath the longings of his soul in prayer to God, before he vents the meditations of it to the people. The foolish virgins lamps went out for want of oyl, *Matth. 25.* *David* calls the Word of God a lamp, *Psal. 119. 105.* Those that carry this lamp to enlighten others, must keep it alive by the oyl of devotion. The neglect of prayer is the Ministers sin, and a prejudice to the efficacy of the word he preacheth; as *Samuel* said; *1 Sam. 12. 23. God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.* You see praying and teaching must go together.

*Lib. 4. de Civ.  
Dei, cap. 5.*

Thirdly, *Many do not preach what for the matter of them can profit:* whilst neglecting the wholesome word of God, they elevate the hearer into a stupid ignorant admiration, soaring aloft in the clouds in high Platonical notions, and abstruse Metaphysical abstract speculations, with which they stretch their own; and break their auditories brain to conceive, which may gratifie an humour, please an itching ear, satisfy a nice curiosity, feed the phansie, but never satisfy and nourish the soul, which comes hungering to the ordinance. For souls, as *Clement* saith, have *id est, propria*, their proper nourishment; you may as well feed bodies with shadows, as souls with such lean jejune notions: of such stuff in a pulpit (for elsewhere I dispa-

*Clement,  
pag. 272.*

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rage it not) I will onely say what the same Authour saith of all the Greek Philosophie, ὡς καὶ τὰς ὅσας καὶ τὰς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐστὶν, like a rotten nut, you may break your teeth in cracking it, and then meet with no kernel, nothing which can satisfie, or nourish you. The Apostle speaks about striving about words to no profit, but subverting the hearers, 2 Tim. 2. 14. it is the Word of God which is the proper food for souls to thrive by; this is a spiritual paradise, the flowers of which have not onely οὐρανίου, a gratefull savour, but καρπὸν ζωῆς, as Chrysostome saith, fruit to nourish the soul. All other things are but husks, and this onely the solid food. If Plato and Aristotle's Philosophie and Metaphysicks can build up a soul to heaven, we may spare our bibles.

Fourthly, Affectation of popular applause and credit, which puts the preacher upon studying more what may please, then what may profit. A doctore glorioso, was one of those things which Luther was wont to pray God to deliver his Church from, from vain-glorious preachers; such as he elsewhere calls Theologi glorie, and gives this description of them, dicant malum bonum, & bonum malum, they can call good evil, and evil good; and then you may easily judge how little they are like to profit their hearers. This affectation makes many both unfaithfull, and unfruitfull in this office: St. Paul opposes this to the service of Christ, as if they were inconsistent, Gal. 1. 10. These are like unfaithfull Embassadors, who, when they are commissioned to promote their Princes interest, they carrie on their own; or like ill spokes-men, who being sent to woo for Christ, speak for themselves onely. I speak not against approbation, as the result of the work, (for which God is pleased to crown the laborious, and encourage his faithfull ministers) but as the primarie intention, or ultimate end of the preacher. This is oftentimes the sin of young Divines: how oft ha's this put men upon preaching error it self, and so poisoned, not profited their hearers? Tertullian mentions it as the policie of Hereticks, neophytes collocant gloriā eos obligent, quia veritate non possunt, to promote young upstarts as the broachers of their Heresies, that whom truth could not, affectation of vain-glorie might engage. It is hard what I say, not impossible, to carrie on the interest of souls, and our applause together. The Apostle telling the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. 2. 8. that he was affectuately desirous of them, he tells you, verse 5, 6. we used not flattering words, nor of men sought we glory.

Fifthly, Ignorance in the dispensers of the word: such as the Apostle describes, 1 Tim. 1. 6, 7. who are desirous to be teachers of others, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. Like Ahimael, will needs be running upon the message, and yet have

Hom. 1. p. 2.

2 Sam. 18. 22

no

Heb. 5. 12.

2 Tim. 2. 15.

no tidings to carrie to the people, but need still to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God. It is said, *Mal. 2. 7. and they shall seek law at his mouth*: and so they may from too many and never finde it; and this is seriously to be lamented. I am sure God complains of it, *Fer. 2. 8. that they that handle the law, knew him not*. I shall not digress to shew the usefulness of all knowledge to a Minister of the Word: onely as pertinent to my present subject, shew that ignorance in the preacher must needs cause unprofitableness in the hearer, for how shall he be *didaxin*, apt to teach? how shall he rightly divide the Word, *εὐδοκειν*, to give every soul his portion? or be able to speak a word in season: who hath not that *καλομεν*? or how shall he unfold Gods word to others, who knows nothing of it himself? We (saith the Apostle) have the minde of Christ, *1 Cor. 2. 16.* and so must every profitable Minister have, and this ignorance is seriously to be lamented in many new upstarts in our daies, who I do not say but they may promote a civil interest, for so did *Feroboam's* Priests of the lowest of the people, *1 Kings 13. 33.* but little like to advance the interest of souls, but a great deal more danger that these blinde guides should lead the people together with themselves into the ditch.

Sixthly, Miscarriage in the Ministers provision and preparations: which are sometimes so nice and curious, like some dishes that are made of so many ingredients, they rather nauseate then nourish: sometimes so careless, rude and undigested, that they bring a disrepute upon the Ministry and account preaching but, as the *Athenians* did, vain-babbling. Observe *S. Paul's* advice to *Timothy*, *1 Tim. 4. 13, 15. Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophesie, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbyterie. Meditate on these things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all, that is, not onely that whereby he himself was encreased in his gifts, but rather that by which the Church was edified and profited.* *malo de ministerii effectu interpretari*, saith *Calvin*. *S. Augustin* would have preachers took rather *quantā evidentia*, then *quantā eloquentia*, with what evidence they speak more then with what eloquence, and to use *diligentem quandam negligentiam*, carefull of their matter, but less nice of their expression; so it be apt and significant; *sic detrahat ornatum, ut sordes non contrahat*, that they neither too curiously affect the dress of Rhetorick, so that the Auditour onely plays with the dish, nor yet a sordid rudeness, lest he nauseate his spiritual food: both these may cause unprofitableness in the hearer, though I think an elaborate affected quaintness, more then a careless plainness. An iron key will unlock what a wedge of gold will not, a power-

Calv. in loc.  
Lib. 4. cap. 10.  
de Doctr.  
Christ.



powerfull plainness will open hearts sooner, then the studied words of mans wisdom.

Seventhly, *Cowardize of preachers*: which makes them afraid to preach what may most probably profit their hearers; which upon some carnal interest or respect durst not reprove sin, either to secure the friendship of some great one, or the liking and love of the people, and this puts them upon preaching *smooth things*, and *placencia*, so *sowing pillows under mens elbows*, and *dawbing with untempered mortar*. *Nathan* is then like to rouse *David*, when he comes home to him with a *Thou art the man*. You know the like good *Theodosius* got by *Ambrose* his sharp reproof of him, upon which the Emperour professed, *Ἀποδείκνυται μόνον ἐκείνου πρὸς αὐτὸν δέξιαι καὶ λαμβάνειν*: that *Ambrose* onely deserved the name of a Bishop: which as it spoke the milde Christian temper of the Emperour, so the faithfulness and courage which becomes a Minister of the Gospel, not to fear the faces of men; but to crie aloud and spare not. This was the courage of *Paul*, though a prisoner, to reprove *Felix* of his injustice and intemperance: and *John* the Baptist to tell *Herod* of his *Herodias*. When *Luther* was charged by some for too much bitterness against *Henry* the eight, he made this Apologie, *magnū non est, si ego Regem terra mordeo, quando ipse nihil veritus est Regem Cæli blasphemare*: he thought it below the courage of a Minister, to fear to reprove an earthly Prince, who feared not to blaspheme the King of Heaven. If ever we intend to profit by preaching, we must be *instant in season*, and *out of season*, that is (as both *Chrysostome* and *Theophylact*) ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ καὶ ἐκ τῆς καιρίας, in *dangerous*, as well as in *peaceable times*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 2. and he tells you how, in the next words, *reprove, rebuke*.

1 Sam. 12. 7.

Eightly, *The unsuitableness of the Ministers gifts*, as to that particular charge he is set over. The *misplacing* of mens gifts and abilities is a very great cause of unprofitableness. Many men, who for their great learning and exemplarie conversation, might seem fit to be *shining lights* in the Church of God, yet are not διδάσκαλοι, as the Apostle requires, *apt to teach*, or condescend to the capacitie of a meaner audiorie, and so great parts oft prove unserviceable in the Church.

Ninthly, *The want of a holy zeal in the preacher of the word*. A cold preacher makes a careless, and so consequently an unprofitable hearer. Every preacher should be an *Apollos*, who was *learned in the scriptures*, *Acts* 18. 25. *servent in the spirit*, and the effect of it was answerable, *viz.* the conviction of his obstinate auditours, *verse* 28. and as *John Baptist* a burning as well as a shining light. *Isaiah's* tongue was *touch'd with a coal from the altar* before he prophesied.

Isa. 6. 6.

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Exod. 19.  
18, 19.

The Spirit descended upon the Apostles in *fiery tongues*, to enflame them with a *holy zeal*: and presently after *Peter* converts *three thousand* at one Sermon, *Acts 2.41*. When the Law was given, the *mount* was on a flame, before the *Trumpet sounded*; and he that sounds the silver Trumpet of the Gospel to others, should himself be enflamed first with a holy zeal and fervour, and this will make him profitable to his hearers: because this holy zeal will put a man upon improving his gifts, and laying out himself faithfully for God, and in an earnest desire of gaining souls, willing with *S. Paul* to spend or to be spent; whereas it is as improbable that cold, luke-warm preachers should enflame or enliven others, as it is for dead embers to kindle others.

Lib. 4. cap. 29.  
de Doctr. Chr.

Tenthly, *The Ministers living contrary to his preaching*: this makes his preaching unprofitable. Observe what God saith, *Psal. 50. 16, 17. Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behinde thee.* They, who would profit others, must *magna vivere* as well as *magna loqui*, saith *Erasmus*, they must live as becomes that Gospel which they preach to others. *Operum copia egregia est sancti copia*, saith *Augustine*: he preacheth best who lives best. *Præbeat aliis exemplum, & sit ejus quasi copia dicendi forma vivendi*, saith the same Authour. Let him exemplifie his doctrine in his life, and preach that as profitably in his conversation, as in the pulpit: otherwise he pulls down with his hands, what he builds up with his tongue, and corrupts them more by his practise, then profits them by his preaching: In prosecution of this, I shall say three things.

Acts 2.41.  
Parans ibid.

I. He may be a powerfull and profitable preacher of the Gospel upon his repentance and reformation, who hath been guiltie of sins of a deep die. I speak this to vindicate and assert the absolute-ness and freedome of God, in making use of, and choosing what instruments he pleaseth. *Paul*, once a blasphemers and a persecutour, afterwards laboured more abundantly then all the rest of the Apostles, *1 Cor. 15. 10. Peter* thrice denied his Master, yet after his repentance profits three thousand by one Sermon. *Potest fieri, ut quis rectè doceat alios, & seipsum non corrigat: ut qui aliis profit, seipsum prætereat.* *Agidius* gives a reason why Christ chose some of his Apostles out of gross sinners; *ut non tam voce, quàm exemplo concionarentur de gratuita remissione peccatorum*, that they might not onely preach Christ by their doctrine, but be themselves visible monuments of the free grace of God. *Matthew*, once a Publican, may upon his return, make an Apostle.

II. It is possible that one, who himself is not converted, yet may



may be instrumental to convert others. The word preached is the instrument of the Spirit of God, who blows when and where he listeth. *Malitia Ministrorum non derogat efficacia ministerii*, is Paraus's divinitie. God may strike a right stroke, although with a crooked instrument. It is not Paul that plants, but God that gives the increase. The word is the sword of the Spirit, it is the spiritual seed; the Spirit may strike home with his own sword, though managed, and prosper his own seed, though sown by a leprous or dirty hand. The carpenters may build an ark for Noah, and be drowned themselves. The sea-mark may rot it self, and yet give others warning to avoid shipwrack. Judas, though a son of perdition, yet used and called as an Apostle, Luk. 9. 6. Gifts and graces are two different things: it is heartily to be wished, and carefully to be endeavoured for, that these were never separated in the Embassadors of the Gospel: but he who wants grace for his own salvation, may have gifts bestowed upon him for the edification of others.

John 3.8.  
Paraus in  
Phil. 1.18.

III. It is not very probable they should, nor can I think they usually do savingly profit their hearers. Observe what the Prophet saith, *Mal. 2.6.* speaking of Levi, *The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.* As it is said of Barnabas, *Acts 11.24.* that he was a good man, and full of the holy Ghost. Whereas he who lives contrary to his preaching, *sermo multus, minus fructus*, as Bernard saith, he may speak much, but profit little. And that upon a four-fold account.

Lib. 2. de  
considerat. ad  
Eugenium.

1. Because he prostitutes his authority and forfeits his hearers belief of what he preacheth, *Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege, &c.* Rom. 2. 22. As if he should say, *It is a shame thou shouldest, and thou spendest thy breath to little purpose if thou doest.* With what face and confidence can he appear against sin in the pulpit, who countenanceth and patronizeth it in his life? Guilt makes men fearful in reprovng others, and this (though seldom acceptable to the hearer) is the most profitable way of preaching: rebuke, exhort, saith the Apostle, *2 Tim 4. 2.* *Nihilo plus fidei continentationes, quam si fabulam in scena ageret histrio*, saith Calvin. A loose liver is oft credited no more in the pulpit, then an actor upon the stage, who personates a Prince, when all the by-standers know he is but a Begger; who hath Jacobs voice, but Esaus hands; who acts a double part, of a Saint in the pulpit, of a sinner out of it: and does not this justly put such an argument as this into the peoples mouths, *If it be true what he speaks, why doth he not practise it? If right as he lives, why doth he not preach it?* Thus both his authority and credit

Calv. de scandal. pag. 107.

are forfeited, and then it is easie to judge how little his preaching is like to profit.

2. Because hereby he *exposeth* his person and office to contempt and scorn. The sin of *Elie's* sons caused the people to *abhor the offering of the Lord*, 1 Sam. 2. 17. It is not learning, or great preferments, or a studied quaintness, or laborious eloquence, can uphold the credit or repute of the Ministers and preaching so much as a *suitable living and conversation*. This raiseth, even in wicked men oft-time, a reverent and high esteem of the works of the Ministry, and of the person for the works sake: as it did in *Herod* towards *John Baptist*, Mark 6. 10. S. Pauls counsel to *Timothy* is very observable, 1 Tim. 4. 12. *Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity*. An exemplary life is a good preservative against contempt, or at worst a ground of comfort under it: whereas an unsuitable conversation layes both office and person open to obloquie and disgrace. Give me leave to allude to what is said of *Naaman*, 2 Kings 5. 1. he was a great man with his Master, and honourable, he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper: this latter obscured the glorie of his greatness, and riches, and valour: so when it shall be said of a Minister, he is learned, judicious, solid, quaint, elegant, powerfull, but covetous, worldly-minded, idle, loose, passionate, this spoils all; and the former cannot so effectually provoke honour and esteem, as the latter procure contempt and shame. and if the person and office be laid open to contempt, the doctrine is little like to profit. If the *Pharisees* be offended with the person of Christ, they profit not by, but deride his doctrine.

3. Because hereby he forfeits those gifts by which he should be able to profit by his preaching. As he sinks into profaneness, so also into shallowness of apprehension, weakness of judgement, slipperiness of memory, unruliness of passion, prejudice against the truth, and the like. Add to this Gods judicial with-drawments oftentimes of his gifts, and the knowledge of his truth from those, who abuse the one, and hold the other in unrighteousness. God, as the Apostle tells us, gives them over *as they deserve*, to an irrational sortishness of minde. Holiness of conversation is the most effectual and compendious way to encrease our gifts: for the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, Psal. 25. 14. whereas it is not probable, he should know much of the minde of God, who wilfully neglects to practise it. As when it is said of *Elie's* sons, 1 Sam. 2. 12. that they were sons of *Belial*, there follows, they knew not the Lord. Sin obscures the understanding, and corrupts principles, and forfeits our gifts, and then they are little like to profit.

4. A bad example is more prevalent to corrupt and mislead men, then

Rom. 1. 28.  
John 7. 17.



then good counsel is to profit and advantage them. *Snadet loquentis vita, non oratio*; Life-oratory is the most powerfull: Seneca gives the reason, *Homines magis credunt oculis quam auribus*; Men believe what they see, more then what they hear. And they who give their doctrine the lie in their lives, are not like to perswade others to credit it. When those, whom the Apostle exhorts to be *ἡρώδης ἡ τριφύλλου*, 1 Pet. 5.3. the examples of the flock, lead the sheep of Christ astray by their lives. Observe what God chargeth the Prophets of Jerusalem with, *Jer. 23. 15.* Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the Prophets, Behold, I will feed them with worm-wood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the Prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land: and *Mal. 2. 8.* Ye are departed out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble at the Law. When these stars are errattick, no wonder, if those who walk by their guidance wander. If the salt want savour, no wonder, if the people be not seasoned with knowledge and grace. A godly Minister is a daily preacher, while his life is a standing reproof to sin, and an argument of piety. *Sermo tuus in exemplo tuo videbitur, sic non solum praeceptor verri, sed testis eris.* It is said of Christ, that he was a Prophet, *ἡρώδης ὁ βασιλεὺς*, Luke 24. 19. mighty in deed as well as in word. S. Paul, who so oft exhorts other to mortification, brings his own body into subjection, and himself runs, as an example to provoke his Corinthians so to run that they might obtain, 1 Cor. 9. 24, 25, 26, 27. How beautifull are the feet of those, that preach the Gospel of peace? Rom. 10. 15. Their feet, their walking, not their tongues onely, their speaking. I shall end this with Pauls advice to Timothy, 1 Tim. 4. 16. Take heed to thy self, and unto thy doctrine. We must do both, as ever we expect savingly to profit either our selves, or them that hear us. I shall end all with a double Application:

First, To the Ministers, that they should endeavour so to preach, that they may profit, not barely that they might please: for *delectare suavitatis, docere necessitatis*, saith Augustine: necessity is laid upon you, yea woe too, if you preach it not to profit by it.

Preach to profit.

I. In conformitie to the examples of Christ and his Apostles, that ye may write after their copy; Christ came not to seek his own glory, John 8. 50. and, I receive not honour from men, saith he, John 5. 41. Christ makes it the badge of a false prophet, to seek himself and his own glory, John 7. 18. Christ's message and work was to call sinners to repentance, to seek & to save what was lost, to binde up broken hearts, to proclaim liberty to the captives; and the opening the prison to them that are bound: And the Apostles trod in their Masters steps: take the one example of S. Paul, who laboured more abundantly

Seneca. ep. 6.

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Seneca. ep. 20.

Lib. 4. c. 12.

de doct. Christ.

1 Cor. 9. 16.

Matth. 9. 13.

Isa. 6. 1.

dantly then all the rest of the Apostles, and all to the profit of the Churches: I have kept back nothing, which might be profitable to you, saith he to the Church of Ephesus, Acts 20. 20. he was affectionately desirous of his Thessalonians: and he tells his Corinthians, more then once, of this, that he was made all things to all men, that he might save some; that he did not seek his own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved; and again, I seek not yours but you: The care he had of the Churches, he reckons as the greatest of his labours: and to name no more, how desirous was he of the good of the Philippians, that he could rejoyce in being offered as a sacrifice upon the service of their faith, Phil. 2. 27.

1 Thess. 2. 8.

1 Cor. 9. 22.

1 Cor. 10. 33

2 Cor. 12. 14

2 Cor. 11. 28

II. To gain and uphold the repute of preaching and the ministers in the hearts of the people. Nothing doth this more effectually, then plain and profitable preaching. The Apostle speaks to this fully, 1 Cor. 14. 25. Learned preaching may beget such an admiration in the people, as they may cry you up for a Scholar; and quaint preaching may get you the elogiums of an oratour; but of the powerfull and convicting preaching of a Christian, they will say God is in you of a truth: though such is the ingratitude of many in these days, that they are ready to cast dirt in the face of that ministry, by which, unless wilfully blinde, they cannot but observe thousands, and confess themselves, if at all, profited and converted.

1 Cor. 14. 25

III. Because this is the very designe of your office: the end of your ministerial gifts and abilities. The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withall. 1 Cor. 12. 7. And the Apostle speaking of these gifts, which Christ, when he ascended, gave to the Pastours of his Church, Ephes. 4. 8, 11. tells you the use and end of them, verse 12, it is, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. And S. Paul tells his Corinthians that his authority was given him for edification. 2 Cor. 10. 8. Those titles, whereby Scripture sets out the Ministers and their office, speak this. They are embassadours; 2 Cor. 5. 20. that engages them to negotiate the peoples reconciliation to God: Angels, Revel. 1. 20. and you know they are ministring spirits sent forth to Minister for them that shall be heirs, Heb. 1. 14. builders, 1 Cor. 3. 10. that speaks their duty to edifie the people in faith and knowledge: stewards, Titus 1. 2. and therefore it is their duty, to distribute what they are intrusted with for the good of the family of God the household of faith: nurses, 1 Thess. 2. 7. and so must give out the sincere milk of the word whereby the children of God may grow: stars, Revel. 2. and therefore must shine for the benefit of others, especially in this night of ignorance and Atheisme. For us then not to aim at profiting by our preaching is to abuse the gifts of God to another



ther end then that for which God gave us them.

I V. For *your own comfort*, both here and hereafter. It will be your comfort upon a *death-bed*, when conscience shall testifie to the sinceritie of your desires of profiting the people of God. It must be sad surely, at such a time, for any of us to reflect upon our unfaithfulness in this office: when conscience shall tell us to our faces, we ascended the pulpit, more to please a fancy, or promote a party, or to advance our selves, then to profit or save souls. On the contrarie, a faithfull discharge of our office, will be then comfortable: this was the matter of S. Paul's rejoycing, 2 Cor. 1. 12. for the accomplishment of which he esteemed his life not dear to him, Acts 20. 24. and so indeed he did, for when he was readie to be offered, this was his comfort, 2 Tim. 4. 6, 7. *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*

V. Because your reward will be certain and great, Dan. 12. 3. One of those three aureolæ which the Schoolmen speak of, by which they mean some additional accessions to the essential happiness of Saints, they assign to the Doctors of the Church: and Scripture speaks of a Prophets reward, Matth. 41. as exceeding the reward of a righteous man, with which the Apostle Peter encourageth the elders in their dutie, 1 Pet. 5. 2, 4. You see then how good ground there is for this promise, and if you would preach to profit, you must preach,

1. *Constantly*, in season, and out of season, 2 Tim. 4. 2. especially considering we are fallen into those times the Apostle there foretold, and useth as an argument of Timothie's diligence, v. 3, 4. The worse the times, the more errours abound, the greater ought our zeal and diligence in the Ministrie to be. We must not onely as the high-priest under the Law, go into the *Sanctum Sanctorum* once in a year; preach a Sermon, which smells of the lamp, now and then, but we must be *instant*, attending to doctrine, and continue in it. Christ enjoyed it thrice to Peter to feed his lambs, and his sheep, John 31. 16. If each Minister wrote after S. Paul's copie, Acts 20. 20, 21. many might be kept close to that truth, from which of late they are apostatized, and reap more profit by the Word of God.

2. *Condescendingly*, suitably to the capacitie of those who are to hear: nothing more easie, then to excuse the vulgar with an affected height of eloquence and learning: *que quicquid non intelligit plus miratur*, as Hierom saith: who are wont highly to admire, what they do not at all understand: but this will never savingly profit them. *If I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you?*

1 Tim. 4. 13.

you? faith S. Paul, 1 Cor. 14. 6. and v. 4. that is *powerfully and plainly*. This was our Saviours practise by familiar parables to stoop to the capacite of his hearers, Mark 4. 33. and I know not whom we may better imitate; in this we must, if we aim at profiting by our preaching.

Secondly, To the *hearers*: that they would endeavour so to hear, that they may profit. For your thriving under means and profiting by preaching of the Gospel, will be,

I. A *credit* to the Gospel, as proclaiming to the world that the Gospel is more then a *mere notion*, and that there is a *power, virtue, and efficacie* in it: while mens unprofitableness opens the mouths of the enemies of that Gospel to charge it as a *humane invention* and *policie* to keep men in awe and subjection: but when they shall see the Gospel having a *powerfull influence* upon your hearts and lives, they will presently conclude it to be the *power of God unto salvation*, as S. Paul tells his *Thessalonians*, 1 Thes. 1. 4.

II. The *joy of Angels*, Luke 15. 7. I say unto you likewise, joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more then over ninetie and nine just persons, that need not repentance. And the means of that is the Word preached, compared to the *grain of mustard-seed*, Mat. 13. 31. if you take it down, it will make you weep, as *Peter's Sermon* did the Jews.

III. The *advantage and comfort of your Pastor and Minister*. I have no greater joy then to hear that my children walk in the truth, faith *John* to his beloved *Caius*, 3 John v. 4. What comfort and joy must it needs be to a faithfull Minister, to be able to say, *Behold, I and the children that God hath given me*, Heb. 2. 13. When he shall see of the travel of his soul and be satisfied. When with S. Paul he can say, *Such have I begotten in Christ through the Gospel*, 1 Cor. 4. 15. S. Paul calls his converted *Philippians* his crown and his joy, Phil. 4. 1. and his *Thessalonians* his glorie and his joy, 1 Thes. 2. 20. and as it is his joy here, so it will be his comfort at the last day: upon which account the Apostle urgeth this upon his *Philippians*, c. 2. v. 16. *holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoyce in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain. holding forth* viz. in their lives; and upon the *Hebrews*, 13. 17. Your profiting by the Word will several waies be the Ministers advantage; I'll but hint.

1. As a *testimonie to the lawfulness*, and *evidence of the power of his preaching*: and at once a credit both to the Embassadour, and his message, the preacher and his Gospel. The converted *Corinthians* were the Apostles *commendatorie Epistles* to set off the worth and efficacie of his Apostleship, 2 Cor. 3. 1, 2. and he tells them 1 Cor. 9. 2. *the seal of my Apostleship are ye in the Lord*: as if he had said,



said, *your conversion is as undoubted an evidence of the truth of mine Apostleship, as a Princes seal added to letters patent to commissionate an Embassadour.*

2. As a *securitie and encouragement* to encrease those gifts by which he may profit. When a Minister sees no issue of his prayers and Sermons of many restless nights, and wearie daies; how does it discourage him in his labours? and while you are *careless* to profit, he proves idle in his studie, and negligent to improve his gifts, which consequently must rust and decay. An unprofitable hearer oft makes a cold, careless, dull preacher, and besides, God for your unprofitableness, may withdraw his assistance and gifts, and *drie up the breast* for your neglect of the *sincere milk* of the Word.

3. As that which *sweetens all his enjoyments*. A large revenue, a great living, a fair repute, a fulness of outward accomodations, satisfie not a faithfull Minister, while the people remain unprofitable, that he sees not the fruit of his labours.

4. It is *your own concernment and interest*. For it is sad if the Word preached profits you not: for if not *this*, probably *nothing* else will: as *Abraham* told *Dives*, soliciting for one to be sent from the *dead* to his brethren. If the Word profits you not the case is desperate. You had better never have heard of the Word, a *Turk* and an *Indian* will come off better then you at the *last day*, Mat. 10. 14, 15. It will be sad for *Capernaum*, *exalted up to heaven* in the enjoyment of the word and ordinances at that day, for not *profiting* by them, to be *thrown down to hell*: so for those unbelieving Jews here, to whom the Gospel was preached as well as to us, but *the word did not profit them*.

Luke 16, 31.

## HEBR. 4.2.

*The word preached did not profit them.*II.  
Sermon.

He second ground of not profiting by the word preached is in respect of *hearers*.

First, *A careless, negligent non-attendance to the word preached*: when mens thoughts are not gathered up, but *roving*, their eyes *gazing* about, their ears not *fixed* upon the word of God; when they bring their *bodies* hither as so

many *carcasses*, but their *souls* are elsewhere. The *covetous* many soul is *locked* up in his *chest* at home, and there *idolizing* in his thoughts his *Mammon* of *unrighteousness*, while he should be serving God in the Temple; the *voluptuous Gallant* comes there for *fashion*, in the mean time his thoughts are taken up with the *newest fashion*, or perhaps with his *hawks* and *hounds*; the *ambitious man*, while taking a nap at Church, *dreams* of *honours* and *preferments*: so that we may say as *Seneca* did of the Philosophers schools, *Magnam hanc auditorum partem videbis, cui Philosophi schola diversorium orti fit*. Many make the Church a *meeting-place* of *idleness*: indeed God complains of this himself, *Ezek. 33. 31. They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them, for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness*: their thoughts are *wandering* in the world, while their *bodies* are *confined* to the Church. And this *non-attendance* is much to be lamented, that many whom you shall observe with a constant unweariedness attentive to a ballad, idle tale, or at a stage-play, at an hours Sermon and preaching of the word of God are tired, dull, heavy, drowsie, and unattentive; so that we may lay it to the charge of our Auditours, that *Demosthenes* reproves the *Athenians* for; that when he made an Oration *de Asini umbra*, they were all very attentive to hear him; but making another *de salute Gracia*, they all deserted him. Many can lend an eare to a tale, a fable, or Romance, who are negligent and non-attendant upon the word of God: and this must needs prove unprofitable upon a double account.

I. It is so in the acquiring of all other knowledge, if he that learns regards not what is read unto him (as suppose a scholar his Tutors lectures, or an apprentice his masters directions) he is not like to profit by them; so it is in getting wisdom by the word of God:

Senec. ep. 108.

Baldwin.  
Gaf. Con.



God: if we would profit by it, we must be such as the Auditours were in Luke 19.47,48. of whom it is said, *they were very attentive to hear him.*

I I. When God comes by his Spirit to make the word effectual to any soul, he raiseth it to an holy and careful attention to the word preached. This is most evident in that pregnant place, Act. 16.14. concerning *Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things spoken by Paul:* and how oft does our Saviour provoke the attention of his Auditours by this expression, *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear?* You must bring an holy attention of body, and intension of minde, if ever you intend savingly to profit by the word of God: as it is said of those in Acts 8.6. *They gave heed unto those things which Philip spake.*

Secondly, *The proposall of wrong ends in hearing:* the generality of hearers do not propound to themselves those ends, for which God hath appointed the preaching of the word; such are the *in-lightning, strengthening, comforting, quickning, convincing* of souls; and upon search it will be found, but a few come for those ends. Some come into the Church, as if a man should go into an *Apothecaries* shop, (not for a medicine to cure them, that were well, but) for a *Recipe* to sleep; I call to witness the drowsiness, and laziness of many. Others are *Athenian* Auditours, come onely to *hear something that is new.* Others out of *custome*; because others do, and themselves have been accustomed to it. Others out of *fashion*, more then *devotion.* Others come to *contradict* and *oppose*, as the *Jews* did *Paul*, Acts 13.45. Others, not as they should do, willing to be judged by the word of God, but to judge it, and the preacher for it; which make the *pulpit*, not a *tribunal* before which they should be judged, but a *bar* before which the preacher must be cited, censured, and judged; these come to pick a hole in the preachers coat, not out of a conscience of their dutie in hearing and obeying the word of God. Others come out of affectation of eloquence, as a man goes to an Oration or Comedy, and then it is no wonder, that whiles he catches at the shadow of Rhetorick (as the dog in the fable) he looses his spiritual food, the *bread of life.* These are like the *proud Greeks*, which seek after wisdom, to whom the preaching of the Gospel seems but *foolishness.* Others come perhaps to promote their interest in the world, like those hearers of our Saviour, *John* 6. that followed him for the *loaves.* Others come onely to hear, not to learn or practise. *Sicut in theatrum voluptatis causâ, ad delectandas aures,* as *Seneca* speaks of some, who came to hear *Lectures* of Philolophy; *Non id agunt, ut aliqua vitia depellant, ut aliquam legem vitæ accipiant, mores suos exigant; sed ut oble-*

Acts 17. 21.

1 Cor. 1. 13.

Seneca ep.  
108.

*Stamento aurium perfuantur; Aliqui & cum pugillaribus veniunt, non ut res accipiant, sed verba, &c.* Others come with their *table-books*, which, though good, is not sufficient. Others to see, and to be seen, "ὡς περ ἡ πόλις τὰ δεικνυμένα," as *Clemens* expresses it; as Gallants flock to a city, not for any business they have there, but to see the stately buildings, and to be seen themselves: and when men come for such ends as these, it is no wonder that they go away without any profit. You should come, if you intend to profit, as *Naaman* did to *Jordan*, to have your *leprosie* cleansed, that you go away from it, as *Seneca* would have men from the hearing of Philosophy, *aut saniores, aut sanabiliores*; or as the *impotent* persons at the pool, John 5. that you may be put in, and healed, and strengthened: come as to that word, which hath Gods *indignation* upon it, in 1 Cor. 1. 21. and that in order to your salvation. But you will say, *If men come for these ends, were it not better that they stay away?* I answer, No, it is sinfull to come thus in the *circumstance*; but it is sinfull in *genere actus* to neglect coming. However come, though out of *curiosity*, so did *S. Austin* to hear *S. Ambrose*, yet was caught by it: though perhaps to sleep (as old Father *Latimer* said) *God may take you napping*: though to oppose and deride the preacher, so did the *Jews*, Acts 2. 13. charge the Apostles as *drunkards*; yet of them three thousand were added to the Church. The net of the Gospel is spread, and thou mayst be caught, though thou intendest it not. As he that comes into the *Sun*, though he intends it not, may be warmed. *Qui in unguentaria taberna resederunt, & paulò diutius commorati sunt, odorem secum loci ferunt*, sayes *Seneca*: so while you stay out a Sermon, some savour of goodness may rest upon you, though perhaps you intend nothing less: if thou comest for these ends, thou mayst, though it is unlikely thou shouldest, profit.

Thirdly, *Worldly-mindedness*: This much hinders the profiting of the word of God. Our Saviour tells you this expressly in the parable of the Sower, Mark 4. 10. ἡ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὰ πλεῖστα: there is a deceitfulness in the world to draw our hearts from the word of God; and that three wayes.

I. As it alienates the affections of men from the word of God. They whose desires run after, and whose love is fixed upon the world, must needs have the one dearer, the other cold to the word of God, *You cannot, saith our Saviour, serve God and Mammon*, Matth. 6. 24. The heart cannot be set upon both treasures at once, no more then can one eye be lifted up to heaven, and the other cast down upon the earth, at the same time. It was the *farm*, and *oxen*, that disaffected those from the *Supper*, to which they were invited, Luk. 16.

14, and therefore the Apostle exhorts, *Set your affections on things above,*

*Clem. pag. 172*

*Col. 3. 2.*



above, and not on things on the earth: you cannot do both together: and S. John, Love not the world, nor the things of the world; if any one love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: and if not the love of the Father, there is like to be little affection to the Word of God. Our Saviour expresses this, by sowing among thorns, Matth. 13. 24. Wordly cares are thorns (as in many other, so especially) in this respect; that as thorns eat out the heart of the earth, where the seed is sown; so do the cares of the world the desires of the soul towards the word of God; *Nummus illis magis resonat, quam verba divina*, saith Ambrose.

John 2. 15.

Ambrose. serm.  
8. in Psal.  
119.

II. As it prejudices them against the word preached, that they shut their eares against it, and will by no means entertain it: the Psalmist compares the wicked to the deaf adder, Psal. 58. 4, 5. Augustin upon that place tells us how the adder does it; *allidet unam aurem terra, & de cauda obturat alteram*: thus, when men have their hearts laid upon the world, it is no wonder, that they are deaf to the word of God: *clausas aures habent & sono aris obtusas*, saies Ambrose, the sound of their riches, deafens them to the word of God. A worldly mans heart must needs be full of prejudices against the word, and the great doctrine of it, self-denial, taking up the cross, and parting with all for Christ: upon hearing of these doctrines, they are ready to say, *This is an hard saying, who can bear it*. This was that which prejudiced the Jews against Ezekiel's preaching, Ezek. 33. 31. that though they were convinced of the truth of it, and brought into a liking of it, yet they did not profit by it: because *their hearts went after their covetousness*. This prejudiced Demetrius and others against the Gospel, as in Acts 19. 27. so those against Paul and Silas, Acts 16. 19. The word of God does most hardly take place in a covetous mans heart.

III. This worldly-mindedness oft makes Apostates from the word of God: the young man in the Gospel heard Christ, and pretended an universal compliance to his commands, Matth. 29. 21. but covetousness lay at the bottome, and therefore, when Christ prescribed his parting with all, he apostatizes from his former profession. This made Demas leave Paul, 2 Tit. 4. 10. While mens hearts are set upon the world, and their thoughts wholly taken up with earthly things, they grow into a disaffection of the word of God, and the preaching of it: and when any danger for the words sake appears, they fall from it: yea, notwithstanding that seeming joy and delight they entertain'd it with. This is most evident in the parable of the seed which fell on the stony ground, Matth. 13. 20. If therefore you would profit, when you come to hear the word, you must lay aside, not onely your worldly employments, but your earthly thoughts

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Clem. pag. 172

*Stamento aurium perfruantur; Aliqui & cum pugillaribus veniunt, non ut res accipiant, sed verba, &c.* Others come with their table-books, which, though good, is not sufficient. Others to see, and to be seen, *ὡς περ ἡ πόλις τὰ διχοδομήματα*, as *Clement* expresses it, as Gallants flock to a city, not for any business they have there, but to see the stately buildings, and to be seen themselves: and when men come for such ends as these, it is no wonder that they go away without any profit. You should come, if you intend to profit, as *Naaman* did to *Fordan*, to have your leprosie cleansed, that you go away from it, as *Seneca* would have men from the hearing of Philosophy, *aut saniores, aut sanabiliores*; or as the impotent persons at the pool, *John 5.* that you may be put in, and healed, and strengthened: come as to that word, which hath Gods *ἐντολὴν* upon it, in *1 Cor. 1. 21.* and that in order to your salvation. But you will say, *If men come for these ends, were it not better that they stay away?* I answer, No, it is sinfull to come thus in the circumstance; but it is sinfull in genere actus to neglect coming. However come, though out of curiosity, so did *S. Austin* to hear *S. Ambrose*, yet was caught by it: though perhaps to sleep (as old Father *Latimer* said) *God may take you napping*: though to oppose and deride the preacher, so did the *Jews*, *Acts 2. 13.* charge the Apostles as drunkards; yet of them three thousand were added to the Church. The net of the Gospel is spread, and thou mayst be caught, though thou intendest it not. As he that comes into the Sun, though he intends it not, may be warmed. *Qui in unguentaria taberna resederunt, & paulò diutius commorati sunt, odorem secum loci ferunt*, sayes *Seneca*: so while you stay out a Sermon, some savour of goodness may rest upon you, though perhaps you intend nothing less: if thou comest for these ends, thou mayst, though it is unlikely thou shouldest, profit.

Thirdly, *Worldly-mindedness*: This much hinders the profiting of the word of God. Our Saviour tells you this expressly in the parable of the Sower, *Mark 4. 10.* ἡ ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐ πλῆρης: there is a deceitfulness in the world to draw our hearts from the word of God; and that three wayes.

I. As it alienates the affections of men from the word of God. They whose desires run after, and whose love is fixed upon the world, must needs have the one dearer, the other cold to the word of God, *You cannot, saith our Saviour, serve God and Mammon, Matth. 6. 24.* The heart cannot be set upon both treasures at once, no more then can one eye be lifted up to heaven, and the other cast down upon the earth, at the same time. It was the *farm*, and *oxen*, that disaffected those from the Supper, to which they were invited, *Luk. 16.*

Col. 3. 2.

14, and therefore the Apostle exhorts, *Set your affections on things above,*



above, and not on things on the earth: you cannot do both together: and S. John, *Love not the world, nor the things of the world; if any one love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: and if not the love of the Father, there is like to be little affection to the Word of God.* Our Saviour expresses this, by *sowing among thorns*, Matth. 13. 24. *Wordly cares are thorns* (as in many other, so especially) in this respect; that as thorns eat out the heart of the earth, where the seed is sown; so do the cares of the world the desires of the soul towards the word of God; *Nummus illis magis resonat, quam verba divina*, saith Ambrose.

John 2. 15.

Ambr. serm.  
8. in Psal.  
119.

II. As it prejudices them against the word preached, that they shut their eares against it, and will by no means entertain it: the Psalmist compares the wicked to the deaf adder, Psal. 58. 4, 5. *Augustin* upon that place tells us how the adder does it; *allidet unam aurem terra, & de cauda obturat alteram*: thus, when men have their hearts laid upon the world, it is no wonder, that they are deaf to the word of God: *clausas aures habent & sono aris obtusas*, saies Ambrose, the sound of their riches, deafens them to the word of God. A worldly mans heart must needs be full of prejudices against the word, and the great doctrine of it, *self-denyal, taking up the cross, and parting with all for Christ*: upon hearing of these doctrines, they are ready to say, *This is an hard saying, who can bear it.* This was that which prejudiced the Jews against *Ezekiel's* preaching, Ezek. 33. 31. that though they were convinced of the truth of it, and brought into a liking of it, yet they did not profit by it: because *their hearts went after their covetousness*. This prejudiced *Demetrius* and others against the Gospel, as in *Acts* 19. 27. so those against *Paul* and *Silas*, *Acts* 16. 19. The word of God does most hardly take place in a covetous mans heart.

III. This worldly-mindedness oft makes Apostates from the word of God: the young man in the Gospel heard Christ, and pretended an universal compliance to his commands, Matth. 29. 21. but covetousness lay at the bottome, and therefore, when Christ prescribed his *parting with all*, he apostatizes from his former profession. This made *Demas* leave *Paul*, 2 *Tit.* 4. 10 While mens hearts are set upon the world, and their thoughts wholly taken up with earthly things, they grow into a disaffection of the word of God, and the preaching of it: and when any danger for the words sake appears, they fall from it: yea, notwithstanding that seeming joy and delight they entertain'd it with. This is most evident in the parable of the seed which fell on the stony ground, Matth. 13. 20. If therefore you would profit, when you come to hear the word, you must lay aside, not onely your *worldly employments*, but your *earthly thoughts*

and desires, which otherwise will choke the word of God. When *Abraham* went in obedience to the command of God to sacrifice his son, he left his servants, and his *Ass* behinde him, *Genes.* 22. 5. *nē impediretur*, saith *Paraus*: so should we all our earthly thoughts and designs, when in obedience to the precept of God, we come to hear the word: that our hearts be emptied of these cares, *nē intus existens*, &c. And we finde worldly-mindedness called by the Apostle the root of all evil, *Tim.* 6. 20. the root of this, amongst the rest, unprofitableness. Therefore it is observed, there were fewer Apostates in the Primitive times because then there was little worldly advantage to tempt and solícite them from the Gospel.

Fourthly, *Neglect of prayer*. I shewed you before the Ministers engagement to pray for the people: in *1 Sam.* 12. 28. now I shall shew you the neglect of this duty in the people is a great cause of this unprofitableness. You are to pray therefore,

I. *That God would open the Ministers mouth*: this *S. Paul* oft puts those upon, to whom he wrote, as the *Ephesians*, cap. 6. ver. 18, 19 and the *Colossians*, cap. 4. ver. 2, 3. both for inward gifts, and abilities, & the outward exercise of them: from which place we may note, 1. That there can be no profiting without a door of utterance: 2. That God must open it, as he did for *Moses*, who was of slow speech, *Exod.* 4. 10, 11, 12. *Ἐπεὶ δὲ διδόντα αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ λόγον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ ἀποκριθῆναι, ὁ ἐπισηάζων καὶ τὸν νῦν, καὶ τὸν λόγον.* so *Clemens Alexandrinus*. God is the onely teacher of us to speak, and of you to profit: He must open our mouths and your hearts, as he did the heart of *Lydia*, and the word to both, before it can profit. So God saies in regard of the people *Esay.* 48. 17. and so Christ promises to his ministers *Luk.* 21. 15. 3. Prayer is the key to open this door of utterance, to reveal the secret cabinet of Gods will and word: Knock, and it shall be opened is Christs promise in *Matth* 7. you must knock by prayer at the gate of heaven, that this door of utterance may be opened to the Minister: *S. Paul* mentions this to his *Corinthians*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 11.

II. *That God would open your hearts*: God must do both, or neither will be done, *Acts.* 16. 14. *S. Paul* prays for his *Ephesians*, chap. 1. ver. 17, 18. and *David* for himself, *Psal.* 119. 18. *Cathedram habet in celo qui corda docet*, saies *S. Augustin*. You may open your eares to the word of God, and all the while your hearts may be shut against it, unless God open that. As our Saviour spake to his disciples; *Having eares hear you not?* &c. so it will be with every one, whose heart God doth not open: the Minister may bring the Word to the eare, but it is the spirit onely, can carry it effectually to the heart: *Prov.* 20. 12. *The hearing eare, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them.* God must not onely give thee the Word,

Lib. 4. cap.<sup>1</sup>  
16. de Doct.  
Christi.



word, but an eye to see it, and a heart to embrace it : as it is said of Christs preaching to his two disciples, *Luc. 24. 45. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures.* The summe of it is, *Prayer* is the means to open the Ministers mouth to speak, and your hearts to entertain the word so, as to profit by it ; and therefore neglect of this must needs cause unprofitableness. The *Wise man* directs you to this course, as in *Prov. 2. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.* It is the Lord onely that gives it, and if you would have it from him, you must crie after it : *if any of you lack wisdom, you must ask it of God,* James 1. 5. How deeply are most men to be charged here? I accuse none of you : but I wish you to deal faithfully with your selves. How seldome do you pray seriously to God, before you come here? Have you this morning been upon your knees, earnestly begging of God for the Ministers, and your selves? if not, no wonder if you go away, as you come ; charge it upon your selves ( quarrel not with God, his Ordinances, or his Ministers ) as the cause of your unfruitfulness ; if you come without praying, I do not wonder, that you go away without profiting.

Fifthly, *Pride* ; when men come with proud hearts to the preaching of the word : they are more ready to scorn and oppose the word, then to profit by it.

This hinders,

I. *Pride of our own righteousness.* When men are puffed up with a conceit of that, they discover not their want of the word of God, and so undervalue and sleight it : this was the reason, why our Saviours preaching wrought so little upon the Pharisees, as you may see *John 39. 40.* they were not convinced of their blindness and sin, but lifted up with an opinion of their own holiness : so it was with the Jews too, *Rom. 10. 3.* If ever we intend to profit by the word, we must come emptied of our own righteousness, and breathing after the righteousness of Christ held forth in the Gospel. An humble, though notorious sinner will profit more at the word, then a proud self-justitarie : as the Publicans did at the preaching of our Saviour, more then the Pharisees.

II. *Pride of our own knowledge* : this makes men think that constant preaching of the word is needless : we shall hear nothing, but what we have heard before ; we know it as well as the preacher can tell us : this is the pride of mens hearts. It was the *Athenians* pride of their *Philosophical notions*, which made them esteem *Paul's* preaching as a *vain babling*, *Acts 17.* As some proud scholars think themselves beyond their Tutors reading : so many are too goodly to be taught. High *Seraphical* souls, that are lifted up a-

bove

Acts 26.18.

bove ordinances ; that pretend to such growth, that they can live without this spiritual food : there is *pride of heart* at the bottome of all. In heaven we shall live immediately upon God ; but here mediately by his ordinances : there we shall see *face to face*, but here in the *glasse of the word* : and if we desire to profit by it, we must bring an humble frame of spirit. *Jobs* language would become us well, *Job* 34.32. *That which I see not, teach thou me* : wait at wisdoms gates for further discoveries, for here we know but in *part*, and see nothing but *darkly* : the best of us had need daily of eye-salve from Christ to have our *eyes opened* by the word : we must become sensible of our ignorance, and in this become *fools*, that we may be *wise* : this pride must needs make the word unprofitable upon a three fold account.

Jerem.44.16

1. It makes men *untractable*, and *unteachable*. A proud heart is apt to set up many carnal reasonings, and proud imaginations, which exalt themselves against the word : those *ὀρυπαύματα* in 2 Cor. 10. 4. whereby they quarrel with the truth of God, as *Nicodemus*, when our Saviour preached to him of *regeneration*, he was as at his, *How can this thing be ?* *John* 3. It was this pride made the Greeks count the Gospel *foolishness*, 1 Cor. 1.23. This pride makes men despise the word, and they think it a kinde of pufillanimitie of spirit to submit to it : *who is the Lord?* saith proud *Pharaoh*, Exod. 5. 2. and thereupon rejects all his messages by *Moses* : so those proud Jews in *Jeremiah*. *Clemens Alexandrinus* saies, *The word is not to be submitted to the judgement of those, who are not yet humbled, but have their minds pre-occupied and prejudiced by proud carnal reasonings.* Observe what the *Psalmist* saies, *Psal.* 10.4. *God is not in the thoughts of his heart.* The proud will not seek after God, that is, in his ordinances ; he thinks it needles, or else below him : the proud *Pharisees* were of all other men the most untractable of Christ's doctrine.

2. Because pride makes men *unwilling to hear what may most profit.* A proud heart cannot endure to hear his *particular* sins, his *darling* corruptions struck at, or discovered by the word of God. A *particular* reproof of sin, is certainly the most *profitable*, 2 Tim. 4. 2. and this a proud heart cannot endure. If Christ reproves the *Pharisees* hypocrisie, they are enraged against him, and plot his death. *Herod* must not endure to hear of his *Herodias* : see *Prov.* 1. 25. where it is said, *Ye set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof* : these were *proud scorers* at the 22. verse, and you may easily judge, how little like these are to profit. He is not like to have his wound *healed*, that cannot endure to have it *searched*.

3. Because



3. Because God will have nothing to do with such in his Ordinances. He gives more grace to the humble, but resists the proud, James 4. 6. God is his enemy. God, as I may say, every Sabbath keeps open house; every one may come, but, believe it, a proud heart is like to go away without his alms. He fills the hungry with good things, but sends the rich empty away, Luke 1. 53. and we finde at Isaiah 66. 5. that God speaks comfort to such as tremble at his word, not that scoff at it, and sleight it, as a proud heart doth. God pours the oyl of grace and knowledge into empty vessels: and therefore, as you desire to profit by the word preached, so labour for an humble frame of spirit. It is said by the Wiseman, Prov. 11. 2. with the lowly is wisdom: and to this end I shall suggest onely three notes.

I. This is the proper qualification of scholars in any science. Nothing hinders knowledge more then pride: this was intimated in the posture, which scholars amongst the Jews were wont to use, viz. to sit at their Master's feet: so we finde it Acts 22. 3. as an expression of humilitie. It is Philo's observation, that when the Essens came into the Synagogue, each scholar, according to their standing, was wont to sit at their Masters feet: this expression speaks aptness to learn, and also a modest humility. *Quod si hac reverentia terrenis praeceptoribus debetur, quanto magis nos ad Christi pedes jacere convenit, ut ex caelesti folio loquenti dociles nos prestemus*, saies Calvin. We read of Mary, Luke 10. 39. that she sate at Jesus feet and heard his word: upon which saies S. Augustine, *Quanto humilior ad pedes Domini sedebat Maria, tanto amplius capiebat*. We must cast our selves at the feet of Christ in his Ordinances, if we will be his scholars. It is said that the people stood at the feet of the mount, when the Law was given, Exod. 19. 17. so must we sit at the feet of Christ, when the Gospel is preached.

Calvin locum

II. This humilitie will make us teachable by the word of God. An humble heart is like melted wax, which is fit to receive the impression of the word of God, and willing to be moulded, and fashioned according to it. An humble heart trembles at the threatenings, and so is like to profit. God will dwell with such, Isaiah 66. 2. It closes with the commands of it: as Cornelius said to Peter, Acts 10. 33. *We are all here present, to hear all that is commanded of God*: and David tells us, that he will hear what God speaks, Psal. 85. 8. It submits to the reproofes of the word of God; it accounts of them as precious oyl: whereas a proud heart holds up against the threatenings, flights the commands, and rages against the reproofes of the word of God. That place of the Prophet Jeremiah, Jerem. 13. 15. is full and worth our observation. *Hear ye, and give ear, be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken*: as if he had said, *If you con-*

Psal. 141. 5.

*tinne in your pride, you will never give an ear to the word of God.*  
But,

III. To make all sure, an *humble heart* shall have the Spirit of God for its teacher, and then such shall be *effectually* and *profitably* taught: *the humble he will teach*, Psal. 25. 8, 9. it shall have the Spirit to *lead into all truth*, John 16. 13. The more *humble*, the more of the *teachings* of God. It is said, that *the Spirit descended upon Christ in the form of a dove*: the *dove* is a meek creature, to teach us, that the discoveries of the Spirit are made to *humble* hearts.

Sixthly, The sixth ground is *carnal reasonings*, and *prejudices* in the hearts of men, which pre-possessing the soul, make the word ineffectual: which *prejudices*, while they remain, obstruct the soul against the word of God: these are as so many bolts upon the doors of our hearts, that the word can get no entrance; these are naturally in every one of our hearts: and they are of two sorts.

I. Against the *word* it self.

II. Against the *preacher* of it.

I shall discover and remove some of them.

I. Against the *word* it self, which although it be admirable in it self, and appointed for most excellent ends by God, yet are many *prejudices* against it in mens hearts: as

1. *The meanness of this Ordinance, and seeming outward inconsiderableness of some hours speaking*, which makes many to disesteem it: whence the Apostle calls it the *foolishness of preaching*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. because most men are apt to judge it so. The ground of this *prejudice* is mens *non-attendance* to the authoritie of God's institution: as if a man should consider the *matter*, not the *stamp* of the coyn, which may make baser mettals currant: we should attend to Gods *substance* upon it, which makes it valuable; as the *diamond* in a ring makes the ring much more precious; and as the seal upon a scedule, which makes it effectual to the purposes contained in it: so is it the institution of God, that makes this Ordinance so worthy and considerable; and if we would profit by the word, we must remove this *prejudice* against the word for the *means* of it in it self, and come to it, as Gods *institution*, and in obedience to his command, and then are you like to thrive and profit by it. The Apostle gives you this, as an account of the *Thessalonians* thriving under the Gospel: that they *received the word, not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God*, 1 Thes. 2. 13. and this made it to *work effectually* in their hearts.

2. The *pre-possession of some politick opinion*, it may be, in compliance of some *great ones*, and the strain of the *times*; hence the word

of



of God finds no entrance: much truth is *stifled* upon this account, because it will not comply with mens *politick* concernments, and the opinions they have taken up in compliance with their *outward* advantages; when truth comes to cross these, then it is rejected. This is no new thing, it was so in our Saviours time amongst the *chief Rulers*, *John* 12. 42. and with the *chief Priests* and *Pharisees*, *John* 11. 48. and upon this account both Christ, and his doctrine was rejected; and hence it is said, that *the great ones received it not*, *John* 7. 48. Thus many make truth to stoop and vail to *politick* designs; and this makes the word of God ineffectual. *Ahab* would not make restitution of *Naboth's* vineyard, because it would not stand with his *interest*: thus doctrines do oft ebbe and flow upon *politick* considerations, and the *truth* is lost in the world.

3. *All is done by the Spirit, the Word is but a dead letter: may we not therefore better expect the whispers of it, then to be tyed to a constant attendance upon the word preached?* As if the impotent people *John* 5. should have argued, *we cannot be healed unless we be put in, therefore we will not lie at the pool*: nay, they knew but one of them could be healed at a time, and yet all lay expecting. Is it in *vain* to sow your seed, because you can have no *crop* without the *influence* of heaven? so no sowing the seed of the word, because no *thriving* without the Spirit? It is said, *James* 1. 18. *Of his own will begat he us of the word of truth*. The word is Gods, yet we are begotten by the word. So *S. Paul* tells his *Corinthians*, *In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel*, *1 Cor.* 4. 15. Because the hand writes, is the pen therefore needless? The *Corinthians* were *S. Pauls* *epistle*, written by the finger of the Spirit, and *Saint Pauls* preaching too, *2 Corinth.* 3. 3. The Sun *enlightens*, but by a *medium*: the Spirit *begets* and *regenerates*, but by the word: as in *1 Pet.* 1. 23, 24.

4. *I have alreadie profited by the word, and therefore I have no further need of it. The Apostle commands indeed, that we should attend upon the preaching of the word, but no longer, then till the day-star arise in our hearts*, *2 Pet.* 1. 19. and I finde that alreadie in those appearances of Christ to my soul, and these spiritual illuminations I have communicated unto me, therefore I am disoblged from any further attendance upon the word. In the removing of this scruple, I desire these particulars may be considered.

I. Thy former experience of the efficiencie and power of the word will, if they have been true, *sweeten* the word more to thee, *raise* up thy esteem of it, *revive* thy delight in it, and *engage* thee in a further, and more *chearfull* attendance upon it. I beseech you, con-

sider that pregnant place of the Apostle, 1 Pet. 2. 2, 3. *As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* A true taste will *sharpen* our appetites, as a childe that hath tasted the *breast*, is still longing and crying after it, and can hardly be *weaned* from it: so it will be with every true childe of God, who hath *relished* this *sincere milk* of the word: he gets a stomach by eating. Indeed a man may have a *light, superficial* taste of the word, and apostatize, as in Heb. 6. 6. and that is sad: but a *real* experience of the power and sweetness of it most effectually quickens desires after it. So it did in David, Psal. 63. 1, 2. He had *seen*, and therefore *desires to see*. As it fared with Jonathan, 1 Sam. 14. 27. *Mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey*: so it is with Christians, who have tasted the sweetness of the word, they are *enlightened* to see the excellencie, and desirableness of it, which quickens their desires after it: as in Psal. 34. 8. *taste that you may see*. It is the want of *taste* and experience, which hinders men from the sight of the excellencie and desirableness of it. I should suspect that man never to have profited by the word, who himself pretends so to have profited by the word, as to be justly exempted from any further attendance upon it.

II. We will charitably suppose it to be true, *that thou hast been converted by the word preached*: but art thou so perfect all on a suddain, that thou needest no *furtherances* and *additions* of further degrees? What? because thou art *born again*, is therefore the *sincere milk* needless, by which thou shouldest grow? *Thou professest the truth*, well; but doest thou not need to be *confirmed* by the word preached? It was the Apostles work to *confirm the souls of the disciples*, Acts 14. 22. and surely most needfull in these unsteadie, unsettled, wavering, and apostatizing times, when many who have *professed highly*, have *apostatized foully*. *Be your knowledge true*, it is but *imperfect*, for we know but *in part*, and therefore you still need the word to be a *light* and a *lamp* to you: *your affections sanctified*, but perhaps are *dull and heavie*, they need the word to quicken and enflame them, as Christ did his disciples, Luke 24. 32. *Thou art at the highest pitch of thy attainments*: why? Christ hath given *Pastours for the perfecting of the Saints*, Ephes. 4. 12. or, if thy *graces thrive and grow*, still thy *comforts* may be but weak and languishing; therefore, thou still needest the word to quicken and strengthen them; for God creates the *fruit of the lips, peace*. They are not sensible of their *imperfection* sure, who feel not the *want* of a *constant* supply of the word of God. The meat of *one day*, will not serve you for a *week*: and surely you do not pray onely for bodily, but



but spiritual food, when you say, *Lord give us this day our daily bread*. The Israelites gathered their *Manna* in the wilderness daily, and not *once for all*; if laid up, it putrified: while we are in our pilgrimage, we must daily gather the *Manna* of the word of God to nourish us, till we come to our heavenly Canaan, and then we shall not need it. *Naaman* washed seven times in *Jordan* before his leprosie was cleansed: some of the old leprosie of sin cleaves to the best, and we must be continually washing in the waters of the *sanctuarie*: and *Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates*, &c. *Prov.* 8.34.

III. As to the *Scripture* pleaded in *Peter*, it is necessary to observe, that the word *ἕως, untill*, doth not denote the *term* of time, but as *Beza* notes on *Matth.* 1.25. *tempus interjectum simpliciter denotat*, it asserts the *present*, but denies not the *future* time, as *Scripture* affords us many instances: as *Matth.* 28.20. *I am with you unto the end of the world*. What, no longer? Yes, it will be their happiness to enjoy him to eternity. So *Matth.* 22.44. *Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool*: But shall Christ sit there no longer? Yes surely. So here, *untill* notes the *end* of the word, not the *term* of time for our attendance. We must attend *so long*, but it doth not say, *then no longer use of it*. The *Enthusiasts* use this place to favour their neglect of the word; for by the *day-star*, they would understand *extraordinary immediate revelations*: so by the *προφητικὸν λόγον*: but it is evident, the Apostle meant the same with that *προφητεία ἡμεῶν*, *vers.* 20. as opposed to those *σπορισμένους μύθους*, *vers.* 16: such are these pretended *Enthusiasmes*. But,

2 Pet. i. 19.

IV. Attend to the word *preached till that time, and then you shall be exempted*: but I pray mistake not, it will not be till you come to heaven; then onely *φωσφόρος ἀναστειλή, the day-star will fully appear in your hearts*. The Apostle here seems to me to oppose *this* and the *other* world. While we are here in *this* world, we are but in *ἀνυχμῶν ὥρῃ τῷ πτω*, and therefore need to attend to the word *ὡς λύχνος as to a light* to guide us: but in the *other* world, Christ as our *φωσφόρος* shall arise with an *immediate* and *clear light* upon our souls. When we shall not need the *medium* of *Ordinances*; but shall see God *face to face*; then shall that *ἡμέρα dawn*, that the Apostle speaks of; then they shall arrive at heaven, where they shall have no need of the *candle* of *Ordinances*, nor the *Sun*, but the *Lamb* shall give them light, *Apoc.* 22.5. So long as the best of us are on this side heaven, we have but *λύχρον φαίνοντα*, and that in a *dark place*. Indeed we have a clearer light shining now, then was in the *Old Testament*; but if compared with the light we shall enjoy in heaven, it is but *ἐν ἀνυχμῶν ὥρῃ τῷ πτω*, in a *dark place*: and thus learned and judicious *Calvin* in

terprets the words. *Ego hanc caliginem, cujus Petrus meminit ad totum vita stadium extendo, ac diem tunc demum nobis illucere interpretor, cum facie ad faciem videbimus quod nunc cernimus per speculum & in enigmate.* It is true that the *Sun of righteousness* does shine in the Gospel, and by that into our hearts; but in the greatest communication of light, there is a mixture of some darkness. We are in the body but as in *ergastulo*, as in a prison, though some light come in by the *craneys*, yet more darkness remains upon us. Then shall the day fully appear, when all clouds of ignorance and error shall be scattered, and the full rising of the *Sun of righteousness* be upon us. Here Calvin observeth, *Nos tantundem absumus a pleno die, quantum a perfectione fides nostra abest:* our light here is but dim, our faith but imperfect; therefore while we live in the world, we shall want the lamp of the word to guide us; without which we walk but in darkness. They live upon death it self, as Clemens elegantly, and see no more then one wrapt up in thickest darkness of the most obscure night. The full appearances of God are in heaven, here he manifests himself by his word, and to expect other ways of discoverie is but to tempt God. Attend then to the word of prophesie till the day-star ariseth, that is, till you come to see God face to face, and then no use of Ordinances; in the interim attend upon it, as the ordinary instituted means of your spiritual proficiencie. Content your selves with this *manna*, while you are in the wilderness, and then you shall eat of the milk and honey of that heavenly Canaan which is above.

5. I enjoy God in my private retirements, and live immediately upon God; and is not this a happy anticipation of heaven? Yes, too happy for any one to enjoy on this side heaven. It was above the estate of man in innocency, to whom then there where means and Ordinances appointed, as the *Tree of life*, which some assert as a means of preserving that immortality, in which he was created: but all agree about it, as a *Sacramental sign* of that eternity, which he should have enjoyed in happiness upon performance of obedience, which God required. Our enjoyment of God here is in and by the Ordinances: we see the power & glory of God in the Sanctuary, as it is *Psal. 63. 2.* an immediate vision is a reserve for heaven. Here God is to be seen as revealed in the word, there we shall see him, as he is: here in a glass, there face to face; here enjoyed in prayer, hearing and other duties, which are our spirituall converses with God, there in an immediate vision and fruition. And this I take to be the meaning of that expression in *1 Cor. 15. 28.* That God may be All in All: when as it is said ver. 24. that then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdome of God: viz. as to the manner of Administration by



by the *preaching* of the word, and other *Ordinances*: then there shall be none of these, for that fruition of God immediately shall be in stead of them all.

6. And lastly, *I have attended long, many years upon the word preached, and I finde no profit: therefore it is in vain to attend any longer.* I confess the non-proficiency of so many under means is a great discouragement both to Minister and people. S. Paul was inclined to be discouraged upon this account as appears by Acts 18. comparing the 6, the 9, and 10. verses together: and to the people, as if their fields should yearly be sown, & yet remain barren, it would much discourage them to sow them again: therefore give me leave to speak a word or two to each.

I. To the Minister. Hast thou preached long, and no profit appears in thy people? First, *mourn in secret* for it: water the word with thy tears: thus did Christ over Jerusalem, whom he had oft discovered himself to, and preached, Luk. 19. 41. Peter wept himself before he converted others. Secondly, *pray much that it may profit*: you may profit more *pietate orationum quam oratorum facultate*, saith S. Augustin: a praying Minister will profit more then an eloquent orator. Thirdly, *reform thy self*: perhaps thy sin may hinder the efficacy of the word, and the seed may not thrive, because thou sowest it with a leprous hand. Observe what Christ saith to Peter, Luk. 22. 32. *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*: and when thou art converted thy self, it is like that thou maiest profit more by thy preaching. But, Fourthly, *by no means give over*: the peoples neglect of theirs, cannot exempt thee from thy duty. *Wo be to me, if I preach not*, saith S. Paul, and whether the people will hear, or whether they will forbear, we must preach: for, 1. *thy word may profit afterward*, we must not limit God, but attend our duty: when Elias was so much discouraged, God had seven thousand reserved: so when Paul was disheartned, God encourages him with this, *I have much people in this city*, Acts 18. 10. It is an excellent saying of Seneca, *An profecturus sim nescio: malo mihi successum deesse quam fidem*. It is better for us to be unsuccessive, then disobedient. It is not for us to know the times and seasons, which God hath reserved. The husbandman sows his seed, though he can give himself no assurance of a crop: which Metaphor the Apostle leads us unto Jam. 5. 7. he does not sow and reap both in a day. 2. *The sincerity of your obedience and endeavour will however be acceptable unto God*, as Abrahams was in offering his son, though the event followed not, therefore in Gods account he did it, Hebr. 11. 17. God in his accepts the will for the deed, 2 Cor. 8. 12. which is a special ground of comfort to Christians in every calling and employment. But, 3. thy  
reward

Seneca ep. 25.

reward shall be secured, *Esay. 49. 5.* God rewards not onely our success, but our faithfulness. *S. Paul* would have the *Philippians* to hold forth the word of life, that he might rejoyce in the day of Christ, that he might not seem to have run in vain, nor laboured in vain: and indeed the Ministers of the Gospel may seem to labour in vain, in respect of the efficacy of their Ministry, but certainly it shall not be in respect of the reward of it.

II. To the people. It is serious matter of lamentation, that the Ministers should have occasion to complain with the Prophet, *Esay 8. 18.* Behold, I and the children, whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and wonders in Israel; that is, because they were so few and rare: and that they should have occasion to complain with the same Prophet, *Esa. 53.* Who hath believed our report? And it is sad for you, Brethren, if it be any of your case: if it be, mourn over it, and pray against it, as the Prophet David, *Psal. 119. 18.* Open mine eyes that I may see into the wonders of thy Law: and withall observe with me;

1. God doth not expect equal proficiency from all: as a Master, or Tutor doth not of all scholars, whom yet he may approve and commend for their diligence. This I speak for the comfort of those Christians, who are the most conscientious waiters on the Ordinances; yet complain they profit not answerably. The good ground in *Matth. 13. 23.* did not bring forth equally, but some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred: fruitfull fields bring forth unequal crops; so it is possible, that among those who conscionably attend on the Ordinances, some may profit more then others.

2. Thy proficiencie may not appear presently: as oft we are in despair of our fields, yet afterwards receive a good crop. In the night of temptation, or the like, the word may be obscured, and not appear, but may afterward shew it self to the comfort of thy self, and rejoycing of others.

3. Perhaps thou profitest more in thy actions, then thy knowledge. They are not alwayes the best proficient in the word, who declare most, and know best; if thy affections be enflamed towards the word, and thou beest carefully conscientious to practise suitably to thy knowledge, thou hast profited more then your notional high-flown professors, which yet are cold and careles.

4. Be still constant in thy attendance upon the word. This is thy seed-time, therefore practise the Wisemans advice, which he gives, *Eccles. 11. 6.* In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand. The good ground brought forth fruit, *εὐ θύραρον, Luk. 8. 15.* that is, though persecuted for the word; or else though no present crop, or present profit. We read of the impotent persons, *John*



5. 3. that they lay at the *pool*, though they were not presently put in: and amongst them *there was a man there, who had an infirmity thirty eight years*, at vers. 5. ἐκ πληλὸς ἡ κατσεια, as Chrysostome observes, *stupendious patience*: and speaking in that *Homily on John 5.* of the admirable patient waiting of that impotent person, he adds, Ἡμεῖς δ' ἐὰν δὴ καὶ ἡμέρας περὶ σκεδρευσόμεν ἀποστασίας ὑπὸ πνέοντι ἐγκαλῶντες, καὶ μὴ τυχόμεν, ἀκνύμεν: *we grow cold and remiss after a small time of waiting.* He lay thirty eight years, yet not healed, and yet did he not give over *waiting*: so should we at this spiritual *Bethesda*, to be cured of our spiritual infirmities: though some of you may have lien as long *unprofitably* at the Ordinances, as he *unhealed* at the *pool*, yet wait still, the time may come, and will be: *Who among you will hearken for the time to come?* Esa. 42. 23. Improve that thou hast already received, and wait on God for an *encrease* in his own way, and thou art under a promise to receive it: for *Habenti dabitur*, Matth. 25. 29.

Secondly, Prejudices against the *Preacher*, and these are either,

I. Against his *Person*. We are offended at the *meanneſs* of it, he is a man *like our selves*, or else we are disaffected to him, and both these cause unprofitableness under the word preached, as it did in our Saviours auditours, Matth. 13. 55, 57. The *Pharisees* were offended at the *person* of Christ, and so rejected his *doctrine*. *Ahab* hates *Micaiah*, the Prophet of the Lord, and therefore refused to enquire of him, 1 Kings 22. 8. This sinfull respect of persons, hinders the efficacy of the word, as it oft begets disaffections in the heart of people towards the ableſt *Ministers*. These come not to hear the *word*, but the *man*: till you esteem the *person*, you will hardly profit by his *doctrine*. I plead not for a superstitious reverence of their persons; but as the Apostle, 1 Thess. 5. 13. I desire that they may be *esteemed very highly for their works sake*. These *prejudices* are oft times causeless, arising from our own corruptions, either because we are too apt to *entertain reports* against them, contrary to the Apostles rule, in 1 Tim. 5. 19. or else *affectation of novelty* disaffects us to them; or *want of charity* to cover their failings; but pry into their *faults* and *failings*, though they be but the *spots* of Gods children. This is most irrational, if we did but seriously consider, that the efficacy of the word depends not upon the Minister. *Peter* at one Sermon in *Acts 2.* converted more, then Christ did in all his time for ought we read. We should not disaffect the *message* for the *messenger*, but rather esteem the *messenger* for the *message* sake: we should minde the *pearl* that is brought us, more then the *hand* that brings it.

II. Against his *gifts*: *I would hear him, but his gifts are mean and small*. I could heartily wish, that there were not too great

ground of this prejudice and complaint at this day, when we have so many of *Feroboams* Priests, every one that will, as in *2 Sam.* 1:20. *Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ascalon.* I dare say, some triumph at it; but for *duly-constituted* Ministers, if faithful, though of lesser abilities, let me suggest,

1. *Variety of gifts are for your good and advantage*, as the holy Apostle tells us, *1 Cor.* 3. 22, 23. whether elegant *Apollos*, or profound *Paul*, or solid *Cephas*; all are for your good. Observe diligently that full and pregnant place in *1 Cor.* 12. from ver. 7. to ver. 12. One interprets *solidly*, another reasons *profoundly*, a third applies *powerfully*, a fourth wins *affectionately*, and another demonstrates *cunningly*, and all to thy profit. There are two things suggested which may help to unprejudice us in this particular: 1. the *freedom of the Spirit*, in distributing these gifts, at ver. 11. and therefore we must not quarrel with the wisdom of God in it. 2. the *end*, for which God hath designed this variety, viz. our *profit*, at ver. 7. there are not the *meanest* gifts, but an *humble self-denying* Christian may make use of, and profit by.

2. *This prejudice reflects dishonourably upon God, and takes his glory and gives it to the instruments.* God will have the glory of his power and mercy to be magnified; and therefore sometimes uses the *meanest* gifts to the *greatest* ends. As this advanced his glory at the first, that the Gospel should be propounded by such *inconsiderable* persons, as a few *fisher-men*. God consulted his glory, when he put this heavenly treasure in *earthen* vessels, *2 Cor.* 4. 7. Look not on *glittering* of the sword, but to the hand that *wields* it: look up from men to God, as *S. Peter* spake to the men of Israel, *Act.* 3. 12. concerning the cure wrought upon the lame man: *Why gaze ye on us, it was not we but God.* God often uses feeble instruments, that himself may have the *greater* glory; and layes aside great parts, when men begin to glory too much in them. The same truth is preached by all, and the *Spirit bloweth where he listeth*.

3. *Perhaps he denies his abilities for thy good.* He could be *Seraphicall*, and in the clouds, but he stoops and descends to thy capacity; and denies himself, that he may gain thee. *S. Paul* was wrapt up into the *third heaven*, and could speak with *tongues more than all*, *1 Cor.* 14. 18. and yet desired to *speak rather to edification*. Judge *charitably*; it is likely the Minister denies his excellency, as desirous that thou shouldst be brought in love with the *naked* truth of the Gospel, and not with the *dresse* it comes in, that the Gospel may come by its own power and efficacy upon thy soul, therefore he studies a *familiar plainness*.

4. *The abler thy Preacher is, if thou profit not so much the more by him,*



him, the greater will be thy condemnation. Satisfie not thy self therefore with this, that thou *live*st under an able Minister (men may affect this more for their credit, then aiming thereby at their profit) nor let this exalt thee in *contempt* of others, thy account will be the greater; and if thou profitest not so much the more, very sad. How sad will it be for *Jerusalem*, who had Christ preaching amongst them, yet *refused* and *rejected* him: and those, against whom the Apostles *shaked* of the dust of their feet, for the not-entertaining of the Gospel: and for you, *Brethren*, who enjoy as much of Gospel-light as ever appeared upon the world, if you shall be found *unprofitable* at that day, when many, who have lived under less means, shall be found improved suitable to the means they lived under, and so consequently *rewarded*, and you, who have been under the *richest* dews of heaven, be found *unfruitfull*, you shall be dispatched with the *unprofitable* servant, *Matth. 25. 30. Take you, and cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth.* Away then with these *prejudices*, which must needs make the word unprofitable: while one quarrels with the *method*, another with the *expression*, a third with the *matter*, a fourth with the *delivery*, the word is like to profit little.

Seventhly, The seventh ground is *hardness of heart*. That natural hardness, which is in every one of us, much hinders the working of the word of God in us: that heart of stone resists the divine impressions of the word; and therefore, God when he promises to write his *Law in our hearts*, he first promises to take away *this heart of stone*, *Ezek. 36. 26, 27.* One thing in the stonie heart is *impenetrableness*, and this makes men *threatning-proof*, and *judgement-proof*: they *tremble* not at the one, nor are *broken* by the other. And this especially, when the soul comes to be *hardned* by custome in sin: the *seed*, you know, which fell on this ground, *perished*. Hardned *Pharaoh* slighted all *Moses's* messages, and remains hard under varietie of Gods judgements, both *threatned* and *inflicted*. Observe the exhortation of the Apostle, *Heb. 3. 13. To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*; as if he had said, *If once your heart be hardned, it will be to little purpose to exhort.* A *hard* heart may be moved by the word of God, but still remain, and afterward grow more obdurate. *Pharaoh* is a sad example, whom every message of God *hardned* more. As *rain* may *wet* a *stone* outwardly, but still it retains it's innate hardness; so it is possible, a *hard heart* may seem outwardly to melt into some tears, the effect, perhaps, of a mans natural temper and constitution, yet remain hard and unbroken: as it was with those in the Prophet, *Jerem. 5. 3. Thou hast smitten them, yet they have not grieved, &c.* Notwithstanding the

varietie of Gods providences, & the Prophets solicitations to return, they remained hard. The Scripture calls this *σκληρὴ καρδία*, *Rom. 11. 8. the spirit of slumber*; so deep and dead a slumber, that the *threatnings* of the word cannot raise, or awaken them out of it: *ἀναιδέτεροι*, as the Apostle speaks of the *Ephesians*, in *chap. 4. 19.* they feel no impressions of the word upon them: nay, it makes them to rage against it, as the *Jews* did, *Acts 7. 51. Ye do alwaies resist the holy Ghost*; that is, speaking by the Prophets and Apostles, as appears, *verse 32.* The *hard* earth must be broken up, ere your seed will thrive in it: so must the *hard* heart, that the seed of Gods word may take *rooting* in it. The word is the instrument of the Spirit to break up the heart; and therefore compared to a *hammer* that *breaks the rock in pieces*, *Jerem. 23. 29.* and till this be done, there can be no profiting by the word. *Josiah* was of a tender heart, and so melted at the word of God, in *2 Chron. 34. 27.* so must all be, who intend savingly to profit by the word. There is indeed a *hardness* of heart, which excludes all possibilitie of *profiting* by the word: I mean, when God seals up men *judicially* under unprofitableness for their former *resisting* and *opposing* the word of God. Of which I understand that place, *John 12. 40. He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see, &c.* This was *Pharaoh's* case, when he had hardened himself, God at last hardened him so, that he refused the messages of God to him by *Moses*, till he was utterly ruined; when mens consciences, as the Apostle saith, are *caterized and seared*; they grow *insensible* under the word of God, and the *shinings* of the Gospel, (as the *Sun* the *clay*) more hardens them: as it fared with the *Jews*, *Ezek. 2. 4.* for all his oft speaking unto them, *they were impudent*, or, as it is in the margin, *Hard of face.*

Eighthly, The eighth ground is *unbelief*. This the Apostle adjoins in the Text, as the cause of the *Jews* *unprofitableness*, because it was not *mixed with faith*, and truly this must needs cause *unprofitableness*, both because we cannot draw near to God in his Ordinances without this. *Unbelief* is a *departing from God*. *We may present our bodies indeed before God, yet without faith can we not digest the word of God into spiritual nourishment*, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* saies.

There is required of us,

1. *An historical faith*, whereby we believe the word of God to be the word of God, and close with the truth of it in our assent and judgement. The understanding is the *leading facultie* of the soul, and the *guide of reason*; I shall never close with that truth in my affections to love it, in my will to practise it, which I do not first as-

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sent unto in my understanding: nor can the will embrace that as good, which the understanding assents not to as true. But this is not enough; for there is required further,

2. *A particular applying faith*, whereby the soul closeth with the word, as proper to it self: when it particularly applies the promises, and closes with the reproofs and threatenings of the word. This makes the word of God to be ineffectual, because men shift it off from themselves; as, *such a reproof of sin concern'd not me: the Minister reprov'd such an one, &c.* A man may assent to the truth of a promise, and yet it be a dry-bread to him without the application of it by a particular faith: so to the truth of a threatening, and yet not be humbled. Faith is necessary to the hearing of the word profitably.

I. *As the eye of faith discerns the truth of the word, as it pries into the mysteries of the Gospel, which the natural man perceives not.* The Apostle 1 Cor. 2. 14. gives a reason why a natural man cannot perceive these; *because they are spiritually discerned*, and so no object suitable to a carnal eye. It is said of Christs entertainment, John 1. 5. *The darkness comprehendeth not the light*: every unbeliever is no better then mere darkness, though improved with the height of acquired knowledge; as Nicodemus and Paul are very pregnant proofs of this: and I appeal to your selves; *Are men like to profit by the word they perceive not, nor understand?*

II. *As it makes the soul to relish, and delight in the word of God.* To an unbeliever, the great mysteries of the Gospel are but foolishness, 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. *The carnal minde is not subject to the law of God*, saith the Apostle, Rom. 8. 7. A carnal minde may approve of the word of God, as true and good, but never close with it thoroughly and heartily, because it is contrarie to it. As a learned man may approve of the light, as excellent in it self, but will not endure to look long upon it, because it may be hurtfull to his weak eyes: thus a carnal heart may assent to the truth of Gods word, and be convinced of the equitie and goodness of it, yet not close with it, because contrarie to his carnal interests, and corrupt principles; and so long no profiting by it. As S. Augustine saith, *Quid hac duo conferunt homini, qui & confitetur verum, & collaudat eloquium, nec inclinatur assensum?* who inclines not his assent, viz. so as to practise it.

Aug. lib. 4. c.  
13. de doct.  
Christi.

Ninethly, The ninth ground is love of some darling and some sin and corruption. The Apostle indeed, James 1. 21. commands to lay aside all superfluitie of naughtiness; but especially any darling sin, which else will make the word unprofitable upon a double account.

I. *As it prejudiceth the soul against the most profitable preaching.*

Such an one must have *placencia*, and speak the language of those in *Isaiah 30.10.* *They say to the seers, see not: and to the Prophets, prophesie not to us right things, but speak unto us smooth things, &c.* Wholesome reproofs are too bitter *pils* for him to take down, because they will stirre the humours that are corrupt. And therefore you shall observe, that some, who have seemingly made a large progress in the profession of the word, have been wholly offended at it, when it hath searched, and disturb their secret *bosome* corruption. Thus it was with *Herod*, *οὐκ ᾔδει*, he did many things, and demonstrated a very fair affection to the word of God, as in *Mark 6.20.* till it came to his *Herodias*; and then he is incensed so far against *John*, as to take off his head: nay, the young man went further, to his *παῦτα ταῦτα*, all these have I kept, and that *ἐν νεότητι μου*, from his youth, *Mark 10.20.* till it came to his covetousness, then the commands of Christ prove ineffectual, and he goes away sorrowfully. While a man retains the love of any darling sin, he is apt to come with a settled resolution, let the Preacher say what he will, shew him the nature, danger, and guilt of such or such a sin, to go on still, as it is *Jer. 2.25.*

II. *As it disaffects them to the preacher.* That did disaffect the Pharisees so much against Christ, his reproving their darling sin of *Hypocrisie*. This caused *Felix* to dismiss *Paul*, his touching upon his darling sin of *intemperance* and *injustice*. And hence proceeds the ebbs and flowings of mens affections to the same Minister. You shall have some, who will constantly attend upon a Minister, and afford him a very fair approbation, till he come powerfully to search his bosome corruption, then he is offended, nay, and perhaps persecutes the Minister too. Thus it fared with Christ himself; : one while they crie, *never man spake like him*, and another while, *Crucifie him, crucifie him*. See the *Galatians* inconstancie to *S. Paul* in *Galat. 4.14,15,16.* they afforded him both reverence, verse 14. and love, verse 15. *rari amoris indicium, oculos eruere plus est, quàm vitam profundere*, saies *Calvin*: but how soon is this love degenerated into hatred and enmitie, verse 16. and that onely because he told them the truth. *Veritas odium*, as saith the *Comædian*: so tell men the truth in laying before them the evil nature and danger of those sins they live in, they presently entertain a secret enmitie against them: and if once mens spirits come to be embittered against the preacher, *suavis non erit doctrina gustus*; they will finde no sweet relish in the word of God.

Tenthly, The tenth ground is *unpreparedness*, when men rush out of their worldly employments without prayer or meditation into the house of God, never considering either into whose presence,



or service they come. God requires a *holy preparation* to all our services, and that not only *habitually*, but *actually* prepared and disposed for them. *Keep thy foot*, saith the *Wiseman*, Eccles. 5.1. *when thou goest to the house of God*. This *holy preparation* was shadowed out by the peoples *washing their clothes* before the deliverie of the Law, Exod. 19.10, 11. and by *Moses his putting off his shoe*, before God spake, and discovered himself to him, Exod. 3. 5, 6. intimating a *putting off our carnal affections*, and *purging our souls* before we come to hear the word: this is necessarie, because to come without this preparation,

I. Is irreverent. You esteem it justly a *high incivilitie* to pres into a Princes Palace with *ragged, dirtie clothes*, or to sit at his table with *unwashed hands*. How much do men affect cleanness, and studie neatness, when they present themselves to the presence of any great man: and is it not much more irreverent to appear before God in his Temple in our *sins and corruptions*? May we not justly fear to be an offence to his *pure eyes*? How do men studie words and *gestures* suitable to the person of any great one, to whom they make their applications: and doth not a resolved prepared *reverence* much more become us, when we address our selves to God? David resolved himself upon this preparation, Psal. 26.6. *I will wash mine hands in innocencie, so will I compass thine altar*. Thus when Jacob went to worship God at Bethel, he purged his house of all the Idols, and made his sons to *wash their clothes*, Gen. 35. 2, 3. We should not onely have our hearts raised to awfull apprehensions of Gods Majestie and presence, but our outward man also composed to a *decent becomingness* and *holy reverence*, as Jacob said of Bethel, Gen. 28. 16, 17. *How dreadfull is this place!* And thus did Cornelius, when Peter was to preach unto him, set himself in the presence of God, Acts 10. 33. So should we come with that *reverence* and *preparedness*, as becomes the presence of God.

II. Unprofitable. Hence that caution, Luke 18. *Take heed therefore how you hear*. *Thornes* grow naturally; but seed, you know, thrives not, but when the ground is first *sifted* and *prepared*: sin encreaseth naturally in our *corrupt* hearts, but they are no fit soil naturally for the word of God, they must be first *sifted* and *prepared* before the seed will grow and thrive there. *Unpreparedness* makes every duty to be ineffectual as you may see in Job 11. 13, 14. Give me leave to allude to that of the *Wiseman*, *prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thy self in the field and afterward build thine house*, Prov. 24. 27. so say I, Prepare thy self at home, and then come to build up thy self in faith and holiness. An *unprepared* hearer will be an *unprofitable* hearer.

Eleventhly,

Eleventhly, The eleventh ground is *Curiosity*: when men come to the Word, affecting more the *elegancy* of the *expression*, then the *wholesomeness* of the *truth*. *Cui nullus in dicendo sermo placet nisi Grammaticè fuerit conceptus, Dialecticè imaginatus, Rhetoricè purpuratus*, as *S. Augustine* expresses it. Such like not their spiritual food unless it be adorned with the *flowers* of *Rhetorick*, who regard more how *handsome* the provision be, then how *wholesome*. Hence *error* many times *handsomely dressed* findes more entertainment, then a *plain truth*. So men take *poysen* instead of *nourishment*: thus when men catch more at an *elegancy* in a Sermon, then a *promise*, they may be *pleased* perhaps, but little *profited*. In seed you look not at *leaves*, as you doe in *flowers*; but at the *inward vertue*, whereby it hath an aptitude to *fructifie*: so should we in the seed of the word, not prize the outward *seeming dresse* and *beauty* of it so much, as the *inward efficacy* of it, whereby it may *fructifie* in your hearts and lives. *Qui maturitatis fructum querit, despicit amana camporum*, saies *Chrysologus*. He that desires profit from a field, lookes to the *ripeness* of the *corn*, not to the *beauty* of the *cockle*, which may more gratifie the eye but not fill the *barn* and *granary*: so he that desires to profit by the word, must not attend the *adorning* of *Rhetorick*, which may perhaps more please the *fancy*, but not at all *relish* the *soul*, such may more gratify the *palate*, but it is not so good for *nourishment*. The affected *elegancy* of a Sermon may more gratify *curiosity*, but not profit and nourish the *soul*. It is true that *S. Augustin* observes, that *propter fastidia plurimorum, etiam ea, sine quibus vivere non possumus, alimenta condienda sunt*. But they live miserably that live altogether upon *sauses*. There is another *curiosity*, much like this, which makes the word unprofitable, and that is a *nice squemishness*, that men *nauseate* truth, that they have heard of before; as an ill *squeasy* stomach, which cannot make two *meales* of the same meat: whereas, we had need, considering our *dulness* to understand, our *forgetfulness* of what we have heard, to have the same truths preached over and over again, and yet shall we finde all little enough. We may see what was the temper of those in *Acts* 13. 42. they besought the Apostles, that the same words might be taught again the next Sabbath: this I speak, not to *patronize* laziness in the preacher, but to *correct* the *curiosity* of the hearer; which makes the word become so unprofitable to them.

Twelfthly, The twelfth ground is, *Not attending upon a constant settled ministry*. This is that which God hath used from the first planting of Churches for the edification of his people, as appears from *Acts* 20. 28. and confirmed by the practise of the whole primitive Church. *Trees oft transplanted* can take no firm

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serm. 18.



rooting: a *rolling stone*, we say, *gathers no moss*: those, whose fickle unsettledness prompts them to run from this Minister to that, and to settle under none, are like to profit very little by the word. This *S. Paul* reproveth sharply in his *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 1. 12, 13. He walkes securely, that is guided by some *fixed star*, whiles he who followes some *meteor* is led into some bog or pit: so those, who walk by the light of some *settled Minister* as a *star fixed* to his orb, are preserved safe in the way of Religion, but those who follow *wandering meteors* fall into some pit of error. Many thrive and live healthfully on *one dish*, while others surfeit of *variety*. By attending upon a *settled Minister*, you come to be acquainted with his *style*, familiar with his *phrase*, and learn his *method*, which will facilitate, and strengthen memory, that you may carry away, and profit more by him.

Thirteenthly, The thirteenth ground is *want of love to the word of God*. Men come out of *custome*, and not out of a *real sense* of the want of the word, or with any love unto it. If men had such affections to the word, as *David* professeth of himself that he had, *Psal.* 119. 20. that his soul did even *break for the longings* he had after Gods word, much more would they profit by it. If with *Job* they *prized* it more then *their ordinary food*, *Job* 23. 12. A man that sits down to his meals, when he hath no liking to the meat set before him, he will not nourish *kindly* by it, neither will any nourish *spiritually*, that brings not a good affection to the word of God.

I. It is so in all *other* knowledge: you may perhaps have it by experience. If you put your children to a *trade* which they do not desire or love, they will scarcely prove *artists* in it; so if men put their children out, intending to make them *scholars*; if they do not love their books, they will prove but *dunces*; and therefore many parents do wisely dispose of their children, according to their *affections* and *inclinations*: so if men love not the word of God, they are not probable to make any great *proficiency* in it. Love is a *quickning affection*; what I love, I am ready to take *pains* for, and not to endure to be without it. Thus if men did love the word, they would take *pains* for it, *familiarize* it to them by much reading, frequent hearing, serious meditation, and not endure to be without it. Let *David* be an example, *Oh, how do I love thy Law!* and this puts upon *meditating* upon the law *day and night*: and when he was without it, he *mourns* for it, and sayes, *One day in Gods courts is better then a thousand elsewhere*; and he cannot *reflect* upon his former enjoyment of that word without a *tear*, *Psal.* 42. 4. The Apostle is very full and pertinent to this purpose, 1 Pet. 2. 2. *As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby*: as a

childe finds *sweetness* in nothing but the *breast*: so that it cries if it be without it; and thus if we affect the word, we shall thrive by it.

II. This provokes God to proceed *judicially*, to give men up to unprofitableness, and while they like not the *truth*, to give them up to *error*. The Apostle is express in this, *2 Thess. 2. 10.* And here we see that *notional* professors, who have got a *notion* of truth in their heads, but not the *love* of truth in their hearts, oft turn *Apostates*, and *back-sliders*, as these times give us sad experience of. When the *Israelites* began to loath *manna*, God gave them *quails* indeed, but his *wrath* with them, *Numb. 11. 33.* and *leanneſs* into their souls, *Psal. 106. 15.* So when men love not the *manna* of the word, &c. Love of the truth puts men upon a *constant attendance* upon the word, as the means of grace and knowledge: and so consequently, they are like to profit by it: so it is said of the *Thessalonians*, that they were *exemplary believers*, *1 Thess. 1. 7.* and the reason thereof is given, *vers. 6.* because *they received the word with much joy.*

Fourteenthly, The fourteenth ground is a *resting in the Ordinance*, in the *opus operatum*, the work done, and so look no further. And this men are very apt to do, as *Micah* blesses himself, *Judg. 17. 13.* because he had gotten a *Levite* into his house: so many conclude the *love of God*, and their *own security*, barely upon the enjoyment of a *ministry* and *preaching*. So did those in *Fer. 7. 4.* They cry out, *The Temple of the Lord*: and so many also of the Gospel, *We enjoy that, and therefore all is well.* You may finde some making plea of this unto Christ, *Luke 13. 26.* *Thou hast taught in our streets*; but Christ dismisses them for all that, with a *nescio*; *I know you not*, *vers. 27.* Thus did the Jews of old, as in *Rom. 2. 17.* they *rested in the law*, and *made their boast of God*: and so do Christians now, they think that they have done God service abundantly, if they have heard two sermons on the Sabbath-day, and never look to their proficiency. As many an idle scholar satisfies himself, that he hath been at his Tutors lecture, though he cares not to profit by it. If you rest onely in this, it may be so far from profiting you, that it may be your ruine. Christ at the last-day will acquit none for enjoying the Gospel, but condemn them for not profiting by it, *2 Thess. 1. 7.*

Fifteenthly, The fifteenth ground is *Unfaithfulness of memory*, and *forgetfulness*, when the word goes in at one ear, and out at another. When this *spiritual food* staves not with us, it is not like to nourish us. The word must be *treasured up in the memory*, before it can *fructifie* in our hearts. It is not the *forgetful hearer* that is *blessed*, *Jam. 1. 25.* such an one is like a man who looks his face in a glass, and presently forgets,



forgets; so such an one takes a *glance* at the word, and the word is out of his memory, as soon as himself is out of the Church. If you would profit by the word, you must practise the Apostles counsel, *Hebr. 2. 1.* *μη παρορῶμεν*, *Let nothing slip*: a Metaphor from a sieve or leaking vessel, when the liquour runs out as fast as it is put in. But because want of memory is a great complaint among many, and some of them, out of question, *serious* Christians, I shall give these brief directions.

1. *Pray for the Spirit*: one office of whom is to be a remembrancer, *John 14. 26.*

2. *Meditate in private upon the word of God.* Men goe out of the church presently to their *worldly employment*, and give liberty to their *vain thoughts*, and *idle discourses*, and so the word is forgotten.

3. *Confer with others about the truths thou hearest.* This conference will both *strengthen* memory, and *fasten* truths in it, and also *quicken* and *enflame* affections to it; as coales lying together kindle each other: thus did the *disciples*, *Luc. 24. 14.* Rather then forget a profitable truth consult the minister: it is needless *modesty* in thee, if thou enquire not, and *pride* in him, if he does not enforme thee.

4. *Get your affections raised and enflamed to truth.* If men loved the word of God, they would remember it more: did you ever know a *covetous miser* forget where his bags were laid: if we could esteem the word as our *treasures*, and *greater treasures* then those of *Gold* we should remember more of it.

5. *Perhaps, what thou remembrest (though but little) keeps thee to close walking with God.* Be not discouraged, thou thriveest more then one, who can carry away a whole Sermon, and lives not suitably, and likely it is, that God may bring into thy remembrance more, according as thou standest in need of it.

6. *Improve what thou remembrest by prayer and practise.* Retire thy self, and turn the *Sermon* into a *prayer*, and that will rivet it in thy memory: however turn it into *practise*, and thou wilt never forget it. An *artist* will never forget the *rules* of that *trade*, vvhich he daily practiseth: Sermons are but *notions* to such, vvho experience not the efficacy of them in their lives.

Sixteenthly, The sixteenth ground is *affectation of novelty and itching eares.* This puts men upon *heaping to themselves teachers*, and forsaking sound preaching, and teachers too. The Apostle foretold such there should be in *2 Tim. 4. 3, 4.* and vve may safely say, that it is fulfilled in our daies. This is one of the great springs of *heresie* and *error*, the minde of man is *novitatis avida*; and hence *new error* pleaseth many more then *old truth*, and every *new-fangled*

Gell. lib. 3.  
cap. 13.

gled opinion, though he that runs may read it contrary to Scripture and reason, creates in mens minds at least a suspicion of the truth, which all ages of the Church hath professed. I am sure Christ makes it the *badge* of his sheep, that they will onely *hear his voice*, and not *strangers*, *Joh. 10. 5.* his *voice* in his word and by his *Ministers*. While men keep not to the wholesome word of God, but affect this variety of *phantasy & opinion*, they *surfet*, not *thrive*. Gellius tells us of *Demosthenes*, that he being young and *Plato's* scholar, by chance going to hear *Plato*, resolved *experiri an ad digna auditu tanto properatum studio foret*; upon which he deserted *Plato*, and became *Callistratus* his disciple: thus many affecting *novelty*, though formerly in profession disciples, are now *turned to fables*, and in stead of being *nourished* by the word, are *poysoned* with *error*.

The seventeenth ground is, *Neglect of a carefull practise of what we hear*: if men came with a resolution to practise, they would go away with much more profit: for this would bring them with a great appetite and liking of the word of God: as they in *Acts 10. 33.* They professed themselves to be *as in the presence of God to hear all*; that is, to hear so as to practise. This is your wisdom, *Brethren*, to come with a resolution to practise: for which you have our Saviour, *Mat. 7. 24.* *He is a wiseman, that heareth and doth my sayings*: and *S. James* would have us not to be *hearers onely*, but *doers of the word*, *Jam. 1. 22.* for such onely are blessed in our Saviours account, *Luk. 11. 28.* I pray, consider that prophesie of *Gospel-times*, with what resolution they invite one another to hear: viz. with a resolution to practise, *Esay. 2. 3.* *Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his wayes*: and what more ordinary, then to call on one another in these dayes, *Come, we will go hear such a man to day?* but observe what followes; *& we will walk in his wayes*: and do you invite one another, *Brethren*, for this end? nay, rather when you go to hear the word, is there not oft a secret *reserve* in your heart to *go on in your sins*? They who come with such a resolution, and not to practise, are not like to profit by the word. It is by this that Christ will have his disciples known, *Joh. 8. 31.* *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed*: and to those God tells us, that he will *continue his mercy and goodness*, *Psal. 103. 17, 18.* *To such as keep his covenant, and that remember his commandements to do them.*

The eighteenth ground is, *Anger & malice either against the word, or the Minister of it*. Many, when the word of God searches and findes them out, rage against it, or the Minister of it. As you may see they dealt with *Stephen*, *Acts 7. 54.* they *gnashed upon him with their teeth*: and at *vers. 57.* they *ran upon him with one accord, and cast him*



him out of the city. Therefore the Apostle exhorts those, who would so receive the word, as to save their souls, to receive it with meekness, *Jam. 1. 21.* that is, with a milde, humble, tractable spirit: that as the Preacher is to instruct you in meekness, *2 Tim. 2. 25.* that is, with gentleness and tenderness to your persons, with anger and zeal against sin, so you are to hear with submissive and tractable spirits, as they did, *Acts 10. 33.* laying aside all enmity against the word and the preacher of it. And when by the word he convinceth you, look upon him as a *Chirurgion*, that comes to search your sores in order to a cure; and when he presseth duty, be facile and tractable. The wisdom that is from above, saith *S. James*, is gentle, and easie to be intreated: and where shall we finde this wisdom in men? you shall sooner enrage then perswade. As concerning the generality of men, those the Apostle calls *arrogant, absurd men*, *2 Thess. 3. 2.* that will quarrel with the *Chirurgion*, when he comes to binde up their wounds. You must learn, *Brethren*, to submit to the word of God in humility, if ever you will profit by it; say as did *Samuel*, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.*

*Jam. 3. 11.*

The nineteenth ground is, *Neglect of a special application of the word preached.* Each hearer almost is ready to put off the word of God to another: *Such a reproof concern'd not me: there the Preacher hit such an one: such a threatening is nothing to me:* and many such like. If ever you will profit by the word, you must do as the disciples did: when Christ had told them one of them should betray him, each of them applied it to himself, saying, *Lord, Is it I?* so you must make a particular application of *promises, threatnings, and precepts.* The best food will not nourish, unless it be received; you cannot live by feeding another man; no more will the word of God, except it be *particularly* applyed to our selves. It should at least put us upon a serious examination; *Doth this threatening appertain to me? Have I interest in this promise?* The childe may starve, though the mother hath a full breast, if it sucks not at it: so we at the breasts of the promises, unless by the Application of a *particular faith*, we make them our own. We must not onely hear of the promises slightly, but we must search them out, and that so as we may know them for our good, *Job 5. 27.* In a Princes proclamation, every one will look to that which concerns himself; so should we in the proclamation of the Gospel, look to that which in particular concerns us, and in particular apply it to us. And therefore you may observe, that when God makes the word to be effectual, he does it by a particular application of it to the soul, as in that of *Nathan to David*, *Thou art the man:* for it is true that *Job* hath observed, *Job 33. 14. God speaketh once, yea twice, yet men perceive it not:*

but then in *verf. 6.* *He openeth their ears, and scaleth their instruction:* that is, by a particular application of the word. I know there are and may be miscarriages here; the *presumptuous* sinner is too ready to *catch at*, and run away with a *promise*: the *humbled dejected* sinner to *despair* under *threatnings*: A great piece of wisdom it is to apply the word suitably to our conditions: if *fainting*, the *promises*; if *secure*, the *threatnings*: and this is so *to be wise*, as *to be wise for ones self*; *Prov. 9. 12.* and so to profit by the word.

And this is the second ground of unprofitable hearing in regard of *Hearers*: the third ground is in respect of the *Word it self*.

The third General ground of unprofitable hearing is in regard of the *Word it self*. But you will say, *How is it possible that the word it self should be a cause of unprofitableness*, which Scripture so much magnifies, and dignifies with such glorious titles, that speak the power of it. As that, *The Gospel is our salvation*, *Ephes. 1. 13.* *The sword of the Spirit*, *Ephes. 6. 17.* *The ministration of the Spirit and righteousness*, *2 Cor. 3. 8, 9.* and that it is the power of God unto *salvation*, *Rom. 1. 16*: I answer, It is not the cause of unprofitableness *properly*, but by reason of *mens corruption* it is so by *accident*. The word in it selfe considered is *ἀφάνισμα* *2 Tim. 3. 16.* but through *mens corruptions*, it becomes *unprofitable*, because *common*: the *Israelites* at first admired the *Manna*, but afterward loathed it, when it grew common, and began to entertain *longings* after their *onions*, and *garlick* in *Egypt*; and we may see how they quarel, and murmur at it, *Numb. 11. 5, 6.* Oh disingenuous ingratitude! what could they have *better* then meat from heaven? I wish this were not the language of many! *what, nothing but this preaching?* the old complaint was, that, *men were like to perish for want of vision*: now men begin to *surfeit* on it. Mans corrupt nature affects *variety*, never long pleased with the same thing, and long enjoyment breeds a disrellish in us of the best things, we prize *pearls*, chiefly, because *rare* and *costly*: the *Romans* wore them upon their shoes, when common: *uni-ones emergere è luto cupiunt*, saith *Tertull.* much adoe to keep them out of the dirt: thus the pearl of the Gospel is troden under foot, because *ordinary* and *common*. The *Indians* prize not precious pearls so much because common; which our Merchants venture expence and danger to procure: many prize not the preaching of the Gospel, which the Merchant sells all for, that he may purchase it. And howdo we disesteem that means of grace which many a dark corner of the nation would be thankfull to enjoy? I pray God we be not taught at length how to value our plenty of the *bread of life* more by the want of it.

How do they prize the *salutes* of the sun, who have half a years *darkeness*?



darkness: which darkness teaches them the value of it; while we pass it over, and look upon it as an ordinary thing, because we enjoy it daily. The *Egyptians* sure never prized *light* so much, as when they had experienced the *plague* of darkness. How would thousands in the nation, in the world, prize that light of the Gospel, which we *under-value*, and grow wanton under? It is indeed much pitie and shame to us, that good food should be *nauseated*, because often set before us: it is a sign our stomachs are not good; our spiritual appetites are distempered. The Scripture speaks fully to the ready and chearfull entertainment of the Gospel-sound, when it was first preached to the Gentiles, as appears by the instances of *Cornelius's* whole family, of *Sergius Paulus* at *Ephesus*; yea, even *Cesars* household at *Rome*, *Philip. 4. 11.* and from the sudden and large spreading of the Gospel in *Rome*, *Corinth*, *Ephesus*, and the rest. See we how it was in the days of *Samuel*, *1 Sam. 3. 14.* the publick exercise of the propheticall office was much decayed by the negligence of old *Eli*, and wickedness of his sons. *Pauci erant pii in populo, & his erat pretiosum verbum, quia raro fiebat ejus audiendi copia:* so *Paraus* upon the place. When preaching was more rare, some would have travelled to hear a sermon, who will not now stir out of doors for it: and this must needs cause unprofitableness; for while men have low thoughts of the Ordinance, they will profit little by it. What the *Wiseman* saith, *Prov. 25. 17. Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbours house, lest he be weary of thee;* may be applyed to this thus; That men are apt to *nauseate* the word of God, because so oft enjoyed by them. Men look at it as a matter of course, and regard not the institution and Ordinance of God, and so under-valuing it, remain unprofitable under it. See how God layes this to the charge of *Israel*, *Hos. 8. 12. I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing. Written to him]* in contradistinction to all other people; yet he esteems them. *Singulari privilegio & eximio illos pra aliis ornavi, & ipsi susque deque habent, quasi rem nihili:* so *Paraus*. And this charge it is to be feared, may be laid to many in these days, who pretend fair to the word of God.

*Paraus in loc.*

The fourth General ground is in respect of God. Unprofitableness, as a sin, cannot come from God, but as a punishment of mens former neglect, and wilfull contempt of the word of God: for though Gods holiness permits him not to have any hand in sin, as sin, it being a contrariety to his nature, and that which he indispensably hateth, yet God may will sin as a punishment, not out of love to the sin, but to punish the person: for though sin be intrinsically evil, yet the manifestation of Gods justice is good: and God for former pro-

provocations oft judicially leaves the creature, and permits him to fall into further sin, as he dealt with the Gentiles, *Rom. 1. 21.* and so was the incest of *Absolem*, as a punishment of *Dauids adultery*, *2 Sam. 12. 11.* Now God proceeds judicially against those who live unprofitably under the word, these eight ways.

I. Sometimes God proceeds in severity against *their persons*, *ruines* and *destroies* them. If Christ comes year after year into the *vineyard*, and findes the *fig-tree* to *bear no fruit*, he gives commiſſion to *cut it down*, *Luke 13. 7.* When God expects, *brethren*, your *fruitfulness* under the means, and finds you unprofitable, his wrath is provoked, and you cut up as a burthen to the earth; so *Matth. 3. 10.* Thus God dealt with the *Jews*, *2 Chron. 36. 15, 16.* he bare with them a long time, till there was no remedie. God will not always endure to have his *messengers* and *messages* contemned. Read *Jerem. 7. 12, 13, 14.* and see there how God dealt with *Shiloh*, and what he threatens to do to the *Jews*, and the reason of all was *their unprofitableness*, as we see at ver. 10. they pretended fair to the *word* and *house* of God, yet did they not *profit*. so, as to leave their sins: for this God threatens their ruine.

II. Sometimes he *denyes* and *with-draws* that *grace from them*, by which they may be enabled to profit; and thus God may be said to *concur* to mens *unprofitableness*; as the *Sun* may be said to be the cause of *darkness*, by with-drawing its light. When men obstinately resist the strivings of the Spirit in the ministry of the word: God saith, *My Spirit shall no longer strive with him.* As he saith, *Hos. 4. 17.* *Ephraim is joyned to idols; let him alone:* and in *Revel. 22. 11.* *He that is filthy, let him be filthy still: so, he that is unprofitable, let him be unprofitable still.* Oh sad judgement! and is as sadly expressed, *Esay 66, the 3, and 4.* *They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations: I also will choose their delusions, &c.* which is as much as to say, he will leave them to themselves, and suffer them to go on to be deluded by those delusions, as such they having wilfully chosen. Men care not to profit by the word, and God gives them over to unprofitableness, as Christ cursed the fig-tree, *Matth. 21. 19.*

III. By taking the Gospel wholly away, and removing the candle-stick from them. Thus Christ threatned to proceed against *Ephesus*, unless by a speedy return she prevented it, *Rev. 2. 5.* *Jerusalem* was come to the height of wickedness, when the Gospel was removed, *Matth. 23. 37, 38.* The *Jews* by a wilfull contempt first put away the Gospel from themselves, before God took it away from them, as the Apostle speaks expressly, *Acts 13. 46.* God will not always cast this *pearl* before *swine*, who, as *Clemens* expresseth it, *de-*  
light



light more in the mud of their lusts, then in the pure waters of the Sanctuary in the word of God. God will not always cast his childrens bread to the dogs. God threatens a famine of the word upon the Jews, *Amos 8*. Would you know the reason? see ver. 5. they began to be weary of it, and unprofitable under it. As a master sometimes deals with a bad servant, pulls his livery over his ears, and turns him out of doors; so God oft deals with men, takes away his Word and Ordinances, his livery and cognizance: or, as a man divorcing an adulterous wife, takes away all her jewels and garments, and puts them upon another; so God, when people go a whoring, takes away from them the Gospel and Ordinances, which are the glory and ornament of a nation, and gives them to others.

**I V.** If he does continue the Gospel, yet he takes away the able and faithful Ministers of it. Observe how God dealt with his vineyard, *Isa. 5*. great expence you may see he had been at, ver. 2. so much, that he appeals to their own judgements, *what he could have done more*, what cost he should further bestow upon them, as to outward means, ver. 4. but there being no suitable thriving under all this, see how the Lord proceeds judicially against it: after the threatening of a totall devastation, ver. 5. he adds, *that the clouds should rain no more upon it*. So doth God deal with an unprofitable people, he removes these clouds (as Ministers are called) who are to drop fatness into the soul, and lets you sit under clouds without water, and none of the dews of heaven in them to make you thrive. And how hath God dealt of late in this Nation, removing from us many eminent Preachers, and pulling down many pillars of the Church? And may we not justly fear, that this hath been by many mens unprofitableness and wantonness under the word of God? Is it not a sign that Gods vineyard hath brought forth little fruit? when God hath eclipsed so many stars of the first magnitude? Is it not to be feared it is because men have neglected to walk by, and improve the light of those, who have held out the Gospel to them?

**V.** By taking away the Ministers gifts. The people are apt to complain of nothing more, then that their preachers want abilities and gifts: perhaps it is a judgement upon your unprofitableness under, and abuse of the word. Alas! the Minister is nothing without divine influence, and communication in his ministerial endowments. It is God that gives some Apostles, some Prophets, &c. *Ephes. 4. 11*. And he may oft-times withdraw this influence. God may dry up the breast, because you thrive not by the sincere milk of the word. *Propter malum populum, etiam bonis tollitur sermo doctoribus*, so Gregorie.

*Hom. 12. in  
Ezek. 3. 26.*

**V I.** By denying success to the word preached, though he continue able

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*Ministers.* God must give the increase, even when a *Paul* preacheth, and an *Apollos* waters; which he is pleased oft to deny. Because of our neglect and contempt of his word, and carelesness to profit under it, he denies the dews of his blessing, which should make the seed of the word thrive and prosper. Or, if the Minister preaches powerfully, yet perhaps not suitably to thy necessities, not what may profit; and this by a secret judgement of God upon thy obstinate unprofitableness under former enjoyments of the word. You have a very pregnant instance of this, *Ezek.* 3. 26. where God tells the Prophet, that he should be dumb, and not be a reprovcr unto them: and these reproofs (as I have often hinted) are most like to profit; as *S. Gregory* sayes, *Magna omnipotentis Dei gratia est, cum iniquè agentibus durus à doctõribus sermo increpationis profertur.*

*Gregor. in  
Ezek.*

*VII.* By letting loose a spirit of delusion, and by suffering false prophets to deceive, and gull the people, and to poison them with error instead of feeding them with the word of God. When Gods vineyard brings forth bryars instead of fruit, he suffers the wolves, and the foxes to eat it up, *Esay.* 5. 4. *sive obrepant vulpes & lupi in Ecclesiam, hoc totum tribuere convenit ingratitude nostræ: quia fructum non reddidimus, qualem decebat, fuimusque desides & otiosi,* saith Calvin. And I cannot but in my serious thoughts resolve that inundation of Heresies upon this nation, and all those delusions, which go abroad, into the judgement of God, giving men over to strong delusions to believe lies, because they improved not, nor delighted in the truth, in the love of it: as God gave the lying spirit commission to go and deceive *Ahab*, *1 Kings* 22. 22. And sure God hath in his justice and wrath, for our wantonness under and inconstancy to the truth, let loose many lying spirits in our daies, which miserably mislead many into damnable Heresies.

*Calv. in loc.*

*VIII.* By delivering up to Satan, and permitting him to have power over them. It is said of *Judas*, *John.* 13. 27. that Satan entred into his heart: if the word take not possession of thy heart, the devil will, whom God useth as the instrument and executioner of his just judgement: even that spirit, who worketh powerfully in the children of disobedience, *Ephes.* 2. 2. I adde one caution, lest I might seem to speak too harshly and severely of Gods proceeding, that God doth not proceed thus judicially presently upon every neglect of his word, but after long exercise of his patience, and after much obstinacy, and wilful contempt of his word. He did not presently cut up the fig-tree, but expected three years, and upon importunity spared it one year more, *Luk.* 13. 8. God forsakes not any till they obstinately forsake him: *non deserit nisi desertem.* Christ did not presently discharge himself of *Jerusalem* but after many calls and warnings and wilful con-

con-



contempt of all these; *How oft would I have gathered thee, and thou wouldst not!* Matth. 23. 37. He warns *Ephesus* to repent before he takes away the candlestick. Rev. 2. 5. Let us then improve this time of patience and the Gospel, while we enjoy it, lest through the hardness of our heart under it, we treasure up wrath against the day of wrath. Rom. 2. 5.

The fifth General ground of unprofitable hearing is in respect of *Satan*, who doth what he can to make the word unprofitable, several ways and devices *Satan* hath to compass this end. Sometimes he is at your elbow jogging you asleep, that men sleep away a Sermon: sometimes he steals away the word you have received, which our Saviour expresseth by the seed that fell by the wayside, Matth. 13. 4, and 19. otherwhile he presents your thoughts with the glory, and greatness of the world, and so they are wandering and distracted: sometimes begetting prejudices in your hearts against the word, or the preacher of it, and so disaffecting you to the truth preached: sometimes suggesting suitable motions and temptations to steal away your hearts from the word, as to the voluptuous mans pleasure, to the ambitious man honours, so suiting their corruptions, and by that they prove careless to profit by the word. And the truth is, the more powerfull the word is, the more the devil opposes it; and the more the light of the Gospel hath appeared, the more hath *Satan* sent out the smoke of the bottomless pit to obscure it; and therefore though the multitude of heresies & errors which abound among us be real matter of a lamentation, as being a sign that the devil hath set his cloven foot amongst us; yet I cannot but from hence conclude, there is a greater power of Gospel-light, which the devil thus endeavours to extinguish; it appears, that the sun is up, that these locusts swarm so. If now you ask me; why the devil so much opposes the word and Gospel? I answer

I. *Because himself hath no share in it:* he is fallen irrecoverably from God and as an ἀπολλύων, he endeavours to bring others into the same destruction with himself; he envied mans estate in paradise; and thought to have ruined him, but perceiving man by a second covenant in a possibility of a better state then that, he more envies his recovery which the Gospel discovers and conveys, as being the Gospel of reconciliation, and therefore he endeavours to make this ineffectual.

II. *Because it is a means to ruin and demolish his kingdome.* The word of God is mighty to throw down Satans strong holds, 2 Cor. 5. 10. whereby he keeps possession of the soul. As the walls of Jericho fell down at the noise of rams horns, so at the sound of the Gospel the walls of *Satan* fall down. Some stones out of this brook will conquer

our *Goliath*: this *sword of the Spirit* conquers Satan, *Ephes* 6. 17. When Christ had sent out his seventy disciples to preach, the effect of it was, that Satan fell like *lightning out of heaven*, *Luke* 10. 18. that is, that power and dominion he exercised before in the world. This was one end for which God sent *Paul* to the *Gentiles*, *Acts* 26. 17, 18. Hence it is that Satan employs all his *subtily* and *strength* against it; for where the word comes in power, the devil is a looser by it: he looseth a *subject* of his kingdome, who by the word is brought from under his obedience. While men remain his *subjects*, he lets them alone quietly, all is in peace while the *strong man* keeps the house; but when the Gospel comes to bring his subjects to the obedience of God, then he raiseth all the force he can against it by himself and wicked men. He hath the possession of our *corrupt hearts*, and therefore will not submit to a dis-possession without much resistance. The Gospel brings us from under Satans power by a pure conquest; for he will not deliver his right and possession upon terms. The devil looks upon it as his *interest* to oppose the Gospel to uphold and secure his ovvn kingdome. Observe vvhhat the Apostle says expressly to this, *2 Cor* 4. 4. *The God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine unto them*: vvhhen the Gospel shines in his full lustre, the devil endeavours to blinde men vvith *wilfull unbelief*, that they see it not. The *ultimate end* that Satan aims at in this is the ruine of their souls: and therefore, in order to it, is carefull, that they come not to the knowvledge of the truth, *without which is no salvation*, *1 Tim* 2. 4. vvwhich he knowvs they cannot do, vvithout the shining of the *light* of the Gospel into their hearts, and therefore endeavours to hinder it vvhat he can. The *Prince of darkness* rules in dark ignorant souls, holds them by those *chains of darkness*, and endeavours to shut their eyes, lest by the *light of the Gospel* they should *discover* the *de-lusions* by which he hath held them *captive*, and so these should be taken from under his obedience: as in the day we discover the vanity of our *night-phantasies, dreams and imaginations*. In a vvord, *Satan looseth where the word profiteth, therefore he doth all he can to oppose it*.

To conclude with these brief directions, by the use of which we may become hearers with profit.

1. *Goto the word as the word, and for the word*, So thou meetest with the wholesome word of God, regard not the drefs it comes in: *Bonorum ingeniorum insignis est indoles in verbis verum amare, non verba*, Augustin. Say thou, Lord, here I come to thy word, *nothing else will satisfie me, not huskes but bread in my fathers house*.

2. *Come to the word as the means of salvation*. Were men convinced



vinced throughly of this, that their salvation was concerned in the word, they would certainly be more careful to profit. They who are soundly taught and instructed by the word of God: *Ἐστὶν ὑμῶν ἀποφύγωμεν*, as Clemens observes, they *mount up to heaven as on eagles wings*. Think with thy self every Sermon thou comest to, *Now I come to further my salvation, my soul is concerned in this Ordinance, this Sermon will be but like Uriah's letter to me a message of death, if I profit not by it*: did men come with these resolutions, they could not but go away with profit. I shall conclude therefore with that of the Prophet, *Esay. 55. 3. Incline your eare, and come unto me, hear (but remember so to hear, as to profit by your hearing) and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.*

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*FINIS.*

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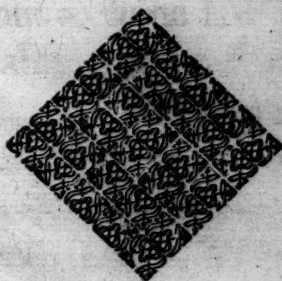


THE  
SEVERITIE  
AND  
IMPARTIALITIE  
OF  
DIVINE JUSTICE.

A  
Sermon preached before the JUDGES, at the  
Assise at Cambridge, July 25. An. Dom. 1654.

By JOHN FROST, B. D. late  
Fellow of S. JOHNS Colledge in  
CAMBRIDGE.

*Justitia non novit patrem, non novit matrem, veritatem novit, personam  
non accipit, Deum imitatur. Cass. in Psal.*



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Anno Dom. MDCLVII.

Printed by John Field, Printer to the University.  
Ann. Dom. MDCLVII.



To the right  
**WORSHIPFULL**

**S I R**  
**HENRY FELTON,**  
**BARONET,**

All increase of true Honour with God  
and man.

RIGHT WORSHIPFULL;



Here is store of Sermons extant;  
the *Pulpit* scarce affordeth more  
then the *Press*: neither know I  
which is more advantageous.  
The sound of the Word pierceth  
more; the letter written endureth longer: the  
voice extendeth but to some few present; the  
writing to many absent, & the Authour, *though*  
*dead, yet speaketh*. Here are two added to the  
number, and by the *relict* of the deceased pre-  
sented to the publick view; which I crave leave  
to honour with your name. Why I do so, I  
need not give account to the world, which alrea-  
die knoweth your worth and deserts; and shall  
know by this that I acknowledge them: besides  
my special obligations to you for your favour to

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me, and my son, unknown to the world. Sir,  
you were willing to have been his Patron  
whilest he lived, be pleased now to vouchsafe  
the Patronage of this his *Posthumous* issue:  
which I humbly commend to your care, and  
you, with your vertuous Ladie, to the grace of  
the Almighty, wishing you both all that little  
happines the earth can afford you, and fulness  
of glorie in heaven,

*Your Worships*

*most humbly devoted,*

JOHN FROST.



## COLOS. 3. 25.

*But he that doth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*



Some of the ancients have charitably excused the Heathens *Polytheisme*, by that probable conjecture, that they worshipped not *divers* gods but *one* and the same, according to those various *benefits* they received from him, or those *divers apprehensions* they had of him. As *Lipsius*, speaking of the gods of the *Stoicks*, saith, they were rather *multitudo nominum* than *numinum*, a multitude of names rather than of natures. And *Augustine*, in his book *de civitate Dei*, brings in the Heathens pleading for themselves, that *they were not so ridiculously ignorant as to think virtue, or fortune, and the rest gods, but onely divers expressions of the same deity*. Which opinion may gain further probability, if we consider what unworthy, unsuitable apprehensions men are apt to entertain of God. Most men (like that *Roman painter Arellius*, who was wont to draw the faces of all his images according to the likeness of that beautie which himself most affected) framing a god to themselves, suitable to their own carnal interests, and corrupt affections, not conceiving of him as he is, and so truly making God an Idol. Thus some fancie a god to themselves all of *justice*, breathing out nothing but *fire* and *brimstone* against sin, armed with nothing but *vengeance* and *terror*, and they can by no means frame to themselves one conception of his *mercy*; and this is the misapprehension which the *humbled & despairing sinner* lies under, who can speak no other language of God, then that of *Job*, *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit, the terrors of the Lord do set themselves in array against me*. Others (which indeed is the more frequent, and the more dangerous mistake) fancie to themselves a notion of God as all *love* and *mercie*, all *tenderness* and *compassion*, in the mean time either through *unbelief* not crediting, or through *inadvertencie* not actually considering the *justice* of God; and this is the mispersuasion and error of the *presumptuous, secure sinner*, and that which encourageth him to a constant and confident continuance

*Lipsius disert. 9.*

*Lib. 4. de Civit. Dei, cap. 24.*

*Job 6. 4.*

in sin against God, and wronging his neighbour; this prompts and encourageth the *superiour* to oppress his *inferiour*, and him to rebel against his *superiour*. Therefore the Apostle here undertaking to press upon these *Colossians* a just and suitable deportment to every subordination God shall set them in, (which is the *relative* importance of the words:) having, *verse 24.* allured them by the hopes of mercie, or a reward, he here perswades them by the terrors of the Lords justice against those, *who in any capacitie or rank whatsoever* (for so *Zanchy* extends the words) *wrongs or injures another. But he that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, &c.*

As if he had said:

*Paraphr.*

Let none lay aside the belief of the justice of God, or encourage themselves in sin, by hopes of impunity; let not the poor inferiour servant (for the words are peculiarly spoken for the comfort of such, by the general consent of expositours) repine despairingly, because here perhaps he suffers wrongfully; nor yet the superiour triumph proudly, because he can at present oppress securely, for there will come a time (though now the poor and inferiour are oppressed without relief, and great ones Tyrannize without controule, when he (be he Prince or Peasant, honourable or despised, rich or poor) be he what he will be (these circumstances of the persons are not valued or considered by that impartial justice of God from which he) that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, &c.

The words you see are the description of Gods severitie against sin; their terms may briefly be explained thus:

*Steph. ex  
Arist. Rhet.*

ὁ ἀδικῶν) *He that doth wrong.* ἀδικεῖν is the same with βλαπτεῖν, *saith Budaus.* Or if you will take the Philosophers account of it, it is, τὸ ἐλαττεῖν ἐκόντα θεῶν καὶ νόμων, *to injure another knowingly contrarie to some law*, either the superiour law of God, or the subordinate (so far as just) laws of men, agreeing with the law *natural* and *eternal*; so that every sin as it is ἀνομία, in the Apostles phrase, *1 John 3. 4.* so it is ἀδικία too, *a wrong to God, our neighbour, our selves; and in this latitude I shall here consider it.*

κοιμῆται) *Shall receive.* The word properly signifies such a receiving as is by way of return or recompence: that is, *He shall have the just reward of that injurie whereby he wrongs another.*

καὶ ἐκ ἐστὶ προσωπολήψια) *Non personam significat, sed personam attributa & circumstantias: Stephan.* Scripture speaks of God, as having a gracious respect to some men more then to others: *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated, Rom. 9. 13.* Thus God had respect to *Abel* not to *Cain*, *Gen. 4. 4, 5.* But the persons here signifies the outward circumstances and qualifications of men, those which make men



men glorious and valuable in the world, such as Honour, Riches, Authoritie, Greatness, Learning, Parentage, Countrey, which are the admiration and terrour of men, yet can neither procure Gods favour for, nor secure the sinner from the stroke of *Divine justice*. Which interpretation is evident from the context, and I shall further clear it anon.

In the words thus opened, four particulars are considerable.

Division.

First, *The indispensable necessitie of justice*: *νομωειται*, he shall receive, it cannot be otherwise.

Secondly, *The equitie of Divine justice*: it is, *οἰκονομος*, That is, *pro gravitate peccati sui*, saith *Paraus*: According to the nature, and proportionably to the greatness of the injurie.

Thirdly, *The extent and universalitie of Divine justice*. And that is double,

I. Of the Person, *οἰκονομος*, Let him be what he will be.

II. Of the Sin, *οἰκονομος*, What ever his sin and injurie be.

Fourthly, *The impartialitie of Divine justice*; *οὐκ εἰς*, &c. There is no respect of persons.

To which four particulars, if I may beg leave to speak,

First, *Absolutely*, in themselves:

Secondly, *Relatively*, as to the persons engaged in the affairs of this day, I shall dismiss both the Text and Congregation. And

First, Of the *indispensableness* of justice upon those who do wrong: they shall receive.

I. They may lawfully from the hand of the civil Magistrate.

II. They shall certainly from the hand of God.

I. They may lawfully from the hand of the civil Magistrate. The Apostle tells us, he is Gods minister, *ἐνδικοῦ εἰς ὀργάνον*, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil, Rom. 13.4. There are indeed a generation of men in the world, who brand all justice with the name of *crueltie*, and Magistracie with the titles of *Tyrannie* and *usurpation*: some such there were in the Apostles time; Peter tells us of some who *despise government*, and *speak evil of dignities*, 2 Pet. 2.10. and Jude verse 8. of such whom he calls *filthy dreamers, who despise dominion*. The *Manichees* conceived that Magistracie was a constitution of their bad god; such were the *Weigelians*, and *Swenkfeldians* of latter years, and such are many amongst us at this day: and if we observe them they are the very same men, who would pull the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, out of the mouthes of Ministers; who would wrest the sword of justice out of the hand of the Magistrate (the design sure is, that so their *licentiousness* might go unreprieved by the one, and unpunished by the o-

ther) onely here is the difference, though they have alreadie so far thrown off religion, as not to regard the one, yet they have not so far laid aside the natural principle of self-preservation and policie, as not to fear the other. Truth is, they fear the Magistrates sword is too edged a tool for them to meddle withall; they know that if they oppose it, they are like to feel it. It hath alwaies been so, that the Magistrates and Ministrie have had the same opposers; and the same principles of Pride, Faction and Ambition carrie men out to contemn both, as imagining themselves too knowing to be taught by the one, or too good to be ruled by the other. It was thus of old; those leading famous rebels, *Corah, Dathan and Abiram*, gain-say and oppose as well *Moses* the Magistrate, as *Aaron* the Priest: and think both of them *take too much upon them, to lift themselves above the congregation of the Lord*, Numb. 16. 3. and therefore they both envie *Aaron* his Priesthood, and *Moses* his Authoritie; they will neither hear the one, nor obey the other, v. 12. And it is so still; those who now cast dirt in the face of the Ministers, would most certainly, if they had power and opportunitie, lay the Magistrates honour in the dust, and crie down them as Tyrannical, as they now do these as *Antichristian*.

I question not (*my Honourable Lords*) but we shall finde you readie and zealous (and the rest of the Magistracie of this Nation) to assest the *sword of the Spirit to us*, and I shall (I am confident as the mouth of all the *sound Ministrie of England*) vindicate and assest the power of the *civil sword to you*, and that upon these grounds; He that *doth wrong*, must receive from the hand of the *Magistrate*:

1. *That the Magistrate may faithfully discharge that office which God hath entrusted him withall.* God hath put a sword into the Magistrates hands, and he expects he should not bear it *vain*, Rom. 13. 4. not bear it for *honour to himself onely*, but for *terror to offenders*, verse 3. *Rulers are not a terror to good works, but for evil.* He is not to wear it as a badge and ensign of Honour, but draw it as an instrument of Justice. It is the very end of his office: *Governours*, saith the Apostle, *are sent by God*, there is their Commission; if we would know the *end* wherefore, the next words resolve us, they are sent by him *εἰς ἐκδίκησιν*, for the punishment of evil doers. And it is this Divine Authoritie, which makes that justice in the Magistrate, which would be crueltie and murder in another. The wise God hath not entrusted the *sword of justice* in the hands of every private man: how soon then would the whole world become an *Aceldama*, if every man might be the revenger of his own wrongs? Therefore God, who hath forbidden private Christians to *avenge themselves*,

1 Pet. 2. 14:



selves, Rom. 12. 19. Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves, &c. yet Chap. 13. 4. hath authorized the Magistrate with his Commission to be the avenger of wrath upon those that do evil. *Et quis obedientiam in crimen vocet?* saith Austin in this case, *Quis obsequium pietatis accuset?*

Lib. 1. de civ.  
Dei, cap. 26.

2. That he may acquit, and clear himself of the guilt of other mens sins. Those sins which the Magistrate, either out of Cowardize, or Partialitie, punisheth not, he makes his own: and what men commit as encouraged by seeing others go unpunished for the same finnes, (and sure no greater encouragement to a licentious corrupt heart to sin, then hopes of impunitie) the guilt certainly is devolved upon the Magistrate, who by punishing it in some should have prevented it in others. Camerarius tells us of a wise answer, though made by a fool, to a King of France, who being solicited to give out a pardon for a murderer made this the ground of his denial, that it was the third murder that man had committed, No, my Sovereign, saith he, it is but the first he hath committed: you committed the second, and the third, *Nam si primi veniam illi non dedisses unicum illud commississet.* It was his first pardon which made him promise himself securitie, and so encouraged him to commit the like sinne.

Camerar. pag.  
469.

It is the charge God laies upon the Princes of Judah, Isa. 1. 23. that they were companions of thieves, that is, *coercendis & puniendis furtis operam non impendebant*, saith Calvin, They did not endeavour to restrain and punish them, and therefore are interpreted as partners with them. Famous is that storie of Ludovicus, one of the Kings of France, to this purpose, who being at his devotions was solicited to pardon a Malefactor condemned to die; he, as willing to shake off such an unseasonable importunitie, granted the request; but suddenly meeting with that passage of the Psalmist, *Blessed are they that keep judgement, and be that doth righteousness at all times*, recalled the Malefactor, and revoked his former grant of mercie upon this reason, *Principem, qui punire potest crimen, nec punit, non minus coram Deo reum esse, quam si id ipse perpetrasset*: that Prince or Magistrate, which can, and will not punish sin, is in the judgement, and sight of God as guiltie of it, as if he had committed it. There are no men in the world more guiltie of other mens sins, then Ministers and Magistrates, the first by not reproving, the other by not punishing.

Calv. in loc.

Camer. ibid.

Psal. 106. 3.

3. In faithfulness to the offendour: to him that doth wrong, the Magistrate by punishing him may do him a real courtesie (as certainly they did the thief who condemned him to the same Cross with our Saviour) and his receiving punishment by the hand of the

the

the Magistrate may be a means of his repentance (for *ἡ δὲ ἀρχὴ ἡ ἀρετὴ*, saith *Plutarch*) and so prevent his receiving it from the just hand of God. Magistrates in Scripture are oft called *Fathers*, as *Pater patriæ* among the *Romans*; and we know what *Solomon* saith of them, *Prov. 13. 24. He that spareth his rod, hateth his son*: and severitie and justice against the sin, may oft in the event prove mercie to the sinner: but however, *He that doth wrong shall receive*, &c.

4. In order to the common and publick securitie, that by one mans punishment others may fear to sin. Which is the account *Moses* gives of Gods appointment of capital punishments under the judicial law: as the seducer from the true worship of God was by Gods command to be stoned, *Deut. 13. 10.* and the end is expressed, *verse 11. that all Israel might hear and fear, and do no more such wickedness.* And the false witness to be punished, *Deut. 19. 19, 20. That those which remain may no more commit any such evil amongst you.* That which is a punishment to one becomes a terrour to all. Besides, punishments are necessarie for the protection of weak and unarmed innocencie; to which Magistrates are, or should be, a refuge and shelter; and which is chief, for the securitie and defence of the Laws, which would be every villains scorn and derision, if they were not hedged in with thorns (as I may say) and secured by punishments. For though the most ingenuous principle of obedience be love, yet the most common principle is fear: and those who will not for conscience sake, as the Apostle commands, *Rom. 13. 5. conform to the Laws, yet will for wraths sake, for fear of punishment*: and many whom Religion will not, Policie will oblige to obedience. God sees it necessarie to secure his own Laws by annexing punishments to them: mans corrupt nature is become now servile, and with those in *Psal. 2. 3.* would think of breaking all bands in sunder, and casting away the cords of Gods commands from them, did they not fear as it follows there, *v. 9. to be bruised with the rod of iron.*

Many keep Gods Laws more out of fear of Hell, then out of any love to Holiness: and much more invalid will any humane Laws be without punishments annexed. If men could promise themselves securitie from the punishment which the Law threatens, they would quickly indulge themselves the libertie of violating what the Law commands. I like not indeed *Draco's* Laws, which were so cruel, that they were said to be written in blood, not with ink; nor approve of *Caligula's* decrees, which were termed *furor, non judicia*: and surely capital punishments, should then onely be inflicted, when the Laws cannot be secured, nor the publick safe-

tie



tie and peace preserved without them. But without some punishment, neither can be safe; the Magistrates authoritie would be contemned, and the Laws, like Cobwebs, swept down by every hand: and therefore those same men (I mean the *Socinians* and others) who inveigh against all punishments (especially, if capital) as a breach of *charitie*, charge the Laws too, as a violation of *Christian libertie*: these are timely to be looked too. Magistrates in Scripture are called *Physicians*; it is a cruel pitie in a *Physician*, to spare an ounce or two of corrupt blood, and thereby endanger the health of the whole bodie. A *Gangren'd* member must be cut off, that the whole be not corrupted, *immedicabile vulnus ense rescindendum est, Ne pars sincera trahatur*; so must a corrupt member of the *Common-wealth*: and however this may seem crueltie to the Offendour, yet, I am sure, it is mercie and pitie to the Publick, which can oft no otherwaies be secured and preserved from danger.

Iſa. 3. 6, 7.

By this time, I hope, you see the Magistrates right to punish them who do wrong; but lest the great *Nimrods* of the world might here take sanctuarie, and because of their own power or policie, or of the Magistrates cowardize or partialitie, they may hope to escape the stroke of the civil sword, and so be encouraged to tyrannize and wrong others, let them know they shall certainly receive at the hand of God for what ever wrong they do, &c. that brings me to the

I I. *The indispenſabilitie of divine justice.* A truth very necessarie to be demonstrated, because though the worst of *Atheists* fear it, (a clap of thunder strikes a *Caligula* under his bed, as fearing the stroke of a revenging justice, and a discourse of it strikes a cruel *Felix* into a fit of trembling) yet many would go for Christians, who do not believe it, or at least do not express the power of such a perswasion in their lives. Would there be so many mightie *Nimrods*, hunters after their neighbours estates and lives: so many unjust *Ahabs* and the like: if they really believed they should receive for that wrong they do, from the hand of an indispenſable impartial justice? Truth is, men must offer violence to the principles of natural conscience (in which there are strong impressions of this truth, as being that *ἡ δικαιοσύνη τοῦ Θεοῦ*, that judgement of God, which the Apostle saith the Heathen, though given over to a reprobate sense, had a knowledge of) before they can cast off all thoughts and jealousies of a revenging justice: but few live under the actual belief of it; the fear of it scares them, but the belief of it doth not reclaim them. Truth is, most men have many carnal prejudices against it; as, to do thus is the mode of the world; and, I shall escape as well as others; and, not to do it will cross my gain and profit; and, that which indeed is

Rom. 1. 18, 32.

val. Max. lib.  
1. cap. 1.

the chief, and makes most *Atheists*, is *present-prosperitie*: they can do *wrong* and yet *thrive* and *prosper*: and this makes many think God rather likes and approves of the sin, then intends to punish the sinner. *Thou thoughtest*, saith God, *Psal. 50. 21. that I was such a one as thy self, but I will reprove thee*. As that Tyrant *Dionysius*, as *Valerius Maximus* tells us, when he had robbed the temple of *Proserpina*, having a safe voyage at sea, *viderisse*, saith he, *quam bona navigatio ab ipsis diis immortalibus sacrilegis tribuitur*: as if he had said, *See how the gods love sacrilege*. I shall therefore endeavour, hoping to give a check to sin, especially to *injustice* and *wrong*, to demonstrate the *indispensabilite* of Divine justice in three or four particulars.

Aug. lib. de  
civ. Dei. c. 8.

Jer. 44. 4.

Exod. 20. 5.

1. From Gods absolute indispensable hatred of sin: the principle and rise of which is not his revealed will, but his nature; he is of purer eyes then to behold iniquitie, *Heb. 1. 13.* God hates sin not onely as a breach of his Law, but as a contrarietie to his nature and holiness; he may as soon not be God, as not hate sin; and what is hatred in God, but *voluntas puniendi*: not any passion or perturbation: as *Aquinas* saith, all the affections of men are attributed to God, *quoad effectum, non affectum*: and what is the effect of anger, and hatred in us, but a desire of revenge and punishment: so in God it speaks his indispensable will to punish. The Poets attribute to Justice, *Brachia recte, slow feet*: so slow is Divine justice, that sometimes it overtakes not a sinner in this life (*Brachia recte, slow feet*, saith *Plutarch*) but it will sooner or later reach him. God, saith *Augustin*, *punitur some sinnes here, that men may not question his providence: not all, lest he should wholly anticipate the last judgement*. But it seems to me impossible, but God should sooner or later punish sin, which he so naturally hates and abhors; therefore calls it in the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *that abominable thing which his soul hates*. 2. To vindicate his glory, and repair his honour, which sin robs him of. He is a jealous God, namely of his honour: God will have his glory from every man one way or other; those that will not glorifie him by doing his will, God will glorifie himself upon them by punishing them against their own. The obedience of the whole creation, being a present debt, can never make reparation for that dishonour the least sinne brings to God: God will therefore repair it by glorifying his justice upon their disobedience: and so make them bear the severitie of his justice, who would not submit to the justnes of his commands.

3. To assert his dominion over the creature. Every sin is a throwing off, and disowning the Soveraigntie of God, and affecting an independencie upon him. The first sin was ushered in thus by our first parents,



parents ambitiously affecting, and credulously believing what the devil most falsely promised them, *to be like Gods. Those mine enemies that would not I should reign over them, &c.* That would not; this is the language of every wilfull sin, it is *virtually* a laying aside the rule and authoritie of God, with that proud Pharaoh, *Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?* Or, as those in the Psalmist, *Let us cast away his cords from us.* As if they should say, we will be ruled by our own laws, and not be bound up to any *superiour* commands: and thus *interpretatively* deny their *dependance* and *subordination* to God. God can no other way maintain his *dominion* over them, then by *punishing*, which they have endeavoured to cast off by finning. As a Prince cannot keep up and preserve his rule and dominion over his subjects otherwise, then by punishing them if they turn rebels: so God upholds his dominion, by punishing those who acknowledge not his *Soveraignty* in *commanding*: and he that chooseth to obey his own will in finning, shall be subordinate to *Gods* *soveraignty* in *suffering*. But,

Gen. 3. 5.  
Luke 19. 27.

Exod. 5. 2.  
Psalm. 2. 3.

4. Lastly, and particularly, as to the case of wrong and injurie, God will certainly punish, *to assert and clear up his Saints innocencie*, which here in the world is oft trodden upon by the foot of pride and tyrannie; which the Apostle to the *Thessalonians* mentions as an argument of just dealing with our brethren, *Let no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such*, 1 Theff. 4. 6. The Poets feign Justice to be the daughter of *Jupiter*, whom he hath set over the world to revenge those injuries one man does to another: I am sure God (if he doth not in this life *plead the cause of the oppressed*, as sometimes he doth) hath appointed a day in which his justice shall punish them, who here unjustly punish his. It is (saith the Apostle, 2 Theff. 1. 6.) *a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled peace.* You may see, perhaps, the proud *Neroes*, and *Caligulaes* of the world *treading stately*, and proudly *vaunting, commanding, threatening* upon the stage of the world (as Emperours in some few *Scenes* of a *Tragædie*) but if we stay to the *last act*, we shall see their *Scarlet* double-dyed in blood; or if innocencie be thrown, and persecuted off the stage before the act be ended, there will come a time when the *righteous* shall *rejoyce to see the vengeance*; and *wash his feet in the blood of the wicked*, those which here oppress and wrong him, saying with the Psalmist, *Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

Psalm. 58. 11.

II. The *equitie* of God's judicial proceedings; it is, & *not* God's justice laies out divers and various punishments ac-

cording to the nature, degree, qualitie, and circumstances of mens fins. This is that which Scripture speaks of so frequently: *God will render to every man according to his deeds*, Rom. 2. 6. *every one shall receive according to that he hath done*, 2 Cor. 5. 10. κομίσμενοι μισθὸν ἡ δικαιοσύνης, *receiving the reward of unrighteousness*, 2 Pet. 2. 13. *God shall cause every man to finde according to his waies*, Job 34. 11. And indeed it cannot be otherwise; for *shall not the judge of all the world do right*? faith *Abraham*, Gen. 18. 25. he can do nothing but *right*; the creature is under such an absolute subordination to the *Soveraignty and dominion of God*, being in *his hand as clay in the hand of the potter*, (which is Scripture language) that it is not capable of receiving any wrong from God; and God's holy will is so *absolute independent* a rule, and square of all righteousness and equitie, that he cannot do any injurie to the creature. *Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance*? faith the Apostle to the *Romans*, Rom. 3. 5. Indeed there may be some seeming inequality in Gods judicial proceedings here in the world: Providences here are oft so intricate (like *Ezekiel's wheels* moving one within another) such *unequal distributions* of rewards and punishments, the righteous oft suffering, while the wicked flourish, that some have from hence taken occasion to quarrel with the Justice, and deny the Providence of God. But be sure God's ways are alwaies just, when most secret; and it will become the modestie and humilitie of a creature (though God's judgements are *unsearchable, and his ways past finding out*) yet to acknowledge with *David*, that *the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*: and where we cannot fathom to crie, ὦ βάθος, *oh the depth*! and at that last great day, that ἡμέρα ἀποκαλύψεως τῆς δικαιοσύνης τοῦ Θεοῦ, *the day of the revelation of the righteous judgement of God*, as the Apostle calls it, Rom. 2. 5. then God will unriddle all his *mysterious providences*, & vindicate all his proceedings from the imputation of injustice, which here the ignorance or malice of men may charge them with. Then we shal discern, as the Prophet *Malachy* faith (though here, perhaps, we cannot) *between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not*. God lays not out equal punishments for unequal fins, but at the last day there shall be a *tolerabilis*, a more tolerable for *Tyre and Sidon*, for some sinners, then for others.

I II. *The universality of Gods justice*, both as to persons and fins. We must all, faith the Apostle, *stand before the judgement-seat of Christ, and every one shall give an account of himself to God*. οὐκ ἔστιν διαφυγὴ ἡ βία τοῦ κυρίου, faith *Plutarch*. The most hardned, proud, stout-hearted *Pharaoh* cannot withstand the *meanest* instrument of *Divine justice*, if armed with Gods *Commission*, the *guilty malefactor*



*How* may many ways escape the stroke of *civil* justice; perhaps he can *conceal* the fact from the *knowledge* of the *Judge*; but no hiding any sin from the eyes of *omniscience* (as the sinner oft desires, and sometimes is so far deluded, as to think he can do it, and thereby is encouraged to sin more confidently). *Πάντα τεύχονται ὡς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ*, *All things are anatomized and open to the eyes of him, with whom we have to do*, saith the Apostle, *Héb. 4. 13.* and, *He sets our most secret sins in the light of his countenance*, saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 90. 8.* Well, but if the malefactor be *convinced* of the fact, he may *break* prison, and *flee*; but whither shall a *guilty* sinner flee to escape Gods justice? *If I go into heaven, thou art there*, *Psal. 139. 8.* but thither he is not like to come; for *there enters nothing that worketh abomination*, *Rev. 21. 27.* If he goes into hell, there justice finds him, *God is there also*, saith *David*; yea, there as a most severe Judge. In earthly judicatories, the person may be guilty, yet may escape the censure of the law for want of witness to prove the fact; but God, when he judgeth, summons in the sinners own conscience, which is instead of a thousand witnesses, so he is *αὐτοκατακριτὴς*, *self-condemned*, and *ἀναπολόγητος*, *wholly without excuse*. Here many, though guilty enough, yet by their power or greatness have out-grown *civil* justice, and are too big to be meddled with, such shall especially receive from the hands of God. *S. John* saw in the *Revelations*, the great as well as the small stand before Gods tribunal; and judged according to their works. The wrongs that Magistrates and great ones do to others here, as being most exemplary, directly contrary to the end of their office; for which they must be accountable to God, and forfeiting that trust God hath reposed in them to right others, and as being such, for which they seldom receive any punishment from the hands of men, God will most certainly and severely punish. Here it is possible, the Judge may be terrified by greatness, or corrupted by money or favour, to be partial in the execution of justice; but God *nec terretur potentia, nec flectitur gratia*, *is neither scared by power, nor prevailed with by favour*; but he that doth wrong shall receive for the wrong, &c.

Rev. 10. 12.

And lastly, here the sin may be such, as the law takes no cognizance of: *de minutis non curat lex*, and *cogitationis panam in foro nostro nemo luit*: but the least sin shall fall under the Censure of Divine justice. Every idle word must be accounted for, every secret and vain thought; God, saith the Apostle, *shall judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel*. Our Saviour lays him who wrongs his brother by an immoderate passion, unworthy language, or the like, open to, and in danger of hell-fire. God is especially a *swift witness* against those that oppress others, that wrong and injure their brethren. Scripture

Mat. 12. 36.

Rom. 2. 16.

Mat. 5. 22.

Mal. 3. 5.

1 Kings 22.  
38.  
Acts 5.

affords us many *sad* monuments, and *signal* instances of Gods justice against such: *Ahab* gets *Naboths* vineyard and *the dogs lick his blood*. How *sudden* and *severe* was Gods justice upon *Ananias* and *Sapphira's* sacrilege: the consideration of which might justly make many in our days tremble. How were *Daniels* false accusers made a prey to those *lions*, to whose cruelty he by their *false witness* was condemned: I wish all that are interested in the employment of *witnesses* this day would consider this & tremble, for certainly *the false witness shall not go unpunished*, Prov. 19. 5. So for *bribery*, what got *Gehazi* by *Naamans* gifts, but his *leprosie* to him and his *posterity*?

2 Kings 5.

IV. The impartiality of Gods proceedings; God is no respecter of persons.

Rom. 8. 7.

I. Not in the communications of his mercy: this the Apostle *Peter* affirms with much earnestness: of a truth, saith he, Acts 10. 34, *I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him*: and the Apostle, sure, spoke this experimentally, who of a poor fisherman was accepted to be an Apostle. Truth is, there is nothing which God more hates, or which Scripture more industriously frees God from then this accepting persons: yet nothing, which the proud corrupt reason of man (which the Apostle justly calls *ἐχθρὰ εἰς Θεόν*, *enmitie against God*) more ordinarily chargeth God with. If God from, eternity chooseth one, leaves another; if in time he confers his grace on one, which he denies to another; gives one assistance to persevere, leaves another to the apostasie of his own heart: presently one *English Arminius* and others cry out, he is a most shamefull acceptor of persons, unjust, and what not? I wish these men would give God that freedome, which sure themselves would, and every man may enjoy without imputation of *injustice* and *partiality*; to wit, to bestow when, and where he will, and upon whom he will, what he hath an *absolute interest* in, and *right* to: so, is it not lawful with God to do what he will with his own? Is thy eye evil because God is good? by these mens good will, God should neither have the *soveraignty* of his *councils*, nor the *freedome* of bestowing his *graces*. I wish these men would consider the truth of that, *in gratuitis non datur acceptio personarum*: surely a man is unjustly charged with partiality for giving that to one, which he is not bound to give to any; for accepting of persons is a *sin against distributive justice*, & *locum habet in iis quæ dantur ex debito*, saith *Aquinas*. Now God is no mans *debiour*, and in giving his *grace* to some he doth no *wrong* to others, because he might have denied it to all: God may silence such reasonings as hee did the *murmuring labourer*, who quarrel'd with him for

Aquin. in  
Rom. 2. 11.



for giving the other a penny; Matth. 20. 13. *Friend I do thee no wrong.* God, in the distribution of his graces, acts not as a Judge but as a Lord: and the motives of it are not any outward, undue circumstances of the persons, but merely his own will, dividing to every man severally as he pleaseth, &c. working all things after the counsel of his own will: as a demonstration of which he oft bestowes his grace upon those who as to humane judgement seem most unlike, and unqualified; witness a persecuting, blaspheming, Saul; a licentious Mary Magdalen; an unjust, injurious thief; it will puzzle the sharpest wit to finde any other motive and ground of this then the sovereignty and good pleasure of God, unless they will say blasphemie and uncleanness be qualifications for grace. Surely, God doth this, as thereby to reap the greater glory of his grace, so to shew his freedome and absoluteness in communicating it. Gods bestowing his grace (saith Aquinas soundly and excellently) is *datio pertinens ad liberalitatem, non ad justitiam*, a gift not of debt but of grace and liberality, and in such there can be no respect of persons. God in this regards not the outward qualities and circumstances of men; not greatness or learning; for not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, or noble are called; but hath respect to his own counsel and purpose, and that must stand. *I will have mercy on whom I will* &c. Rom. 9. 15. And if proud reason (as it is usual) charge this as arbitrariness and tyranny: that in Job may silence it, *Is it fit to say to a King thou art wicked: and to princes ye are ungodly? how much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more then the poor: for they are all the work of his hands.* And I shall say with S. Augustine, *scrutetur qui potest profundum, verumamen caveat precipitium*: while he quarrels with and pries into the counsels and secrets of heaven, let him beware he falls not into the depths of hell.

2. Not in the executions of his justices but whom that finds under the same guilt, it condemns to the same punishment. This the Apostle asserts, 1 Pet. 1. 17. *Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every mans works:* and the Apostle to the Romanes, Rom. 2. 9, 10, 11. *Tribulation and anguish to every soul that doth evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, for there is no respect, &c.* Yet each of these had what to plead; the Gentile his ignorance, the Jew his priviledges as Gods peculiar: but justice spares them not, because they enjoyed them, but punished them more severely, because they contemned and abused them: it is *arguatur Indulgentia*, of the Jew first, at the ninth verse of that second chapter to the Romanes. The Gentiles punishment shall be less, *ex iustis meritis non est deus*, saith Chrysostome on the place, *because they have not the law accusing them.* It is not the enjoyment of Ordinances, and outward priviledges, which the

1 Cor. 12. 11  
Ephes. 1. 11.

Aquin. 2a. 2a  
q. 63. art. 3.

1 Cor. 2. 26.

Job 34. 18,  
19.

Chrysost. in  
loc.

Fews

Hebr. 2. 3.

Deut. 10. 16  
17.Chrysost. in  
Rom. 2. 9.

Job 34. 19.

Jam. 5. 2.

Ezek. 17. 19.

Luke 12. 47.

Marth. 7. 23.

*Fews* rested in, and which (I fear) is the rotten foundation, which too many *Christians* build upon, which will secure a sinner from the stroke of an impartial justice; but if contemned and mis-improved will make it heavier. The *Fews* rested in their outward circumcision as their security, but *Moses* bids them circumcise their hearts, & that upon this ground that, *God was a terrible God, which regardeth not persons.* No outward circumstances of the person can over-balance this impartial justice; nor a mans greatness & honour, these too oft aggravate his sin, and increase his punishment. Magistrates sins are of a deep die, scarlet sins, and will provoke a severer justice: ἡ δὲ κρίσις ἐν ταῦτα χαίρει τὰ ἀξιώματα ἔχει, saith Chrysostome: In Gods judgement greatness of person is inconsiderable. The Angelical excellency could not secure or exempt them from the severity of Gods justice, they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day, Jude 6.

Nor will riches profit in the day of Gods wrath; as God dislikes not holiness though under rags, so he approves not sin under the gayest coat; nor will patronize profaneness, and wrong under Princes robes and crowns. He accepteth not the person of princes, nor the rich man more then the poor; in the place of *Job* before cited. *Lazarus*'s rags make him ne're the less fit or welcome guest into *Abrahams* bosome; nor can all *Dives* his pomp, and wealth, and delicious fare, secure him from the sentence of justice, dooming him to eternal flames. God likes neither the one better for his riches, nor the other the worse for his poverty. All a wicked mans riches purchase for him onely a hotter place in hel, (at *Rome* indeed they may perhaps buy him a pardon) and but treasure up wrath, their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord.

Nor will a wicked *Achitophels* policy secure him; you know it hastned his ruine here, and will increase it hereafter. Nor shall the great Scholars learning (if without holiness, and doing the will of God) at the day of Gods judgement avayl him any more but to increase his stripes. Surgunt indocti, & rapiunt cælum, was an old and a sad complaint of the Father. Nay, that best piece of learning, to teach others, will not stay the hand of justice, if such be workers of iniquity. Many will come at the last day with that plea, *We have prophesied in thy name*, who yet shall be dispatched with a *Nescio vos, I know you not, depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* All the fair shews and appearances, the affected garbs, and hypocritical personating Religion, (if without the power of godliness) will not then be considerable, any further then to bring upon mens heads κείμα σαρκοστέρον, greater damnation, as our Saviour told those arch-hypocrites the



the Pharisees, Matth. 23. 14. *Adams fig-leaves* will not secure him from the summons of Gods justice: the paint of hypocrisie falls off at the fire of Gods wrath. That of *Chrysostome* is full to this purpose; 'Οὐ πρὸς αὐτῶν ποιότητα ἀλλὰ πραγμάτων ἐξέταξι διαφέρειν, *God will judge at the last day not according to the qualitie of the persons, but the difference of the actions*, whether good or bad; therefore God is described by *S. John* at the last judgement, as *sitting upon a great white throne*; which speaks both glory and purity; no spot of injustice or partiality in it, but (as at the words following) both *small and great* are judged, every one according to his works.

And now give me leave (Right Honourable) with that modest humility as becomes my years, and yet with that holy boldness as befits my Office, to urge the imitation of this *Divine justice* upon you. I shall endeavour to do it so, that I may seem neither to forget to whom, nor yet from whom I speak. God hath put his work into your hands: you are in the place of God to the people, you judge for him, you have the stamp of his authority upon you, he hath honoured you with his name, *I have said ye are gods*; wherefore judge as he does. *Arnobius* tells the heathens, that their gods were such, *quorum similes nec vos esse, nec alium quempiam velitis*; as they were ashamed either themselves or others should imitate: but Scripture represents God to us as a pattern for our imitation; *Be ye holy as I am holy, and perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*. Imitate him as *Christians*, much more as *Magistrates*. Imitate his vindictive justice; which is sometimes in Scripture called his holiness: and herein imitate,

First, *The equity of his justice*, by proportionating punishments to the nature of the offence; to punish less than the fact deserves, may be of bad consequence to the publick; to punish more severely than it deserves, is always injustice to the offendour; so far innocency it self suffers, as any man is punished beyond the demerit of his offence. The *Romane fasces* were a bundle of rods, with an axe in the midst, to signify the equity of *Magistrates* in punishing some onely with a rod, others with the axe: the one for lesser faults, the other for capital crimes.

Secondly, *The universality of his justice*. Let not any wrong go unpunished, whether it be in mens good names (which to some are of as great concernment as their lives) by defamation; in their estates, by injury, robbery, and oppression; or in their lives, by murder; or in all these by false accusations and witnesses. But I mention this head that I may commend to your justice especially the wrongs of God; those which more immediately strike at his honour & his glory. My Lords, God is very severe in revenging the wrongs done to you,

D d

when

*Chrysost. in*  
*Rom. 2. 11.*

*Rev. 20. 11.*

*Ibid. v. 12.*

*Applicati*  
*on.*

*Gen. 50. 19.*

*Psal. 82. 1.*

*Arnob. pag.*  
*190.*

*Matth. 5.*

*Josh. 24. 19.*

2 Pet. 2. 9,  
10.

1 Sam. 8. 7.

Mal. 3. 8.

1 Tim. 2. 2.

2 Pet. 2. 1.

when the Apostle *Peter* speaks of Gods *reserving the wicked to the day of judgement to be punished*, he ushers this in with a *μάλιστα*, chiefly them who *despise government*, and are not afraid to *speake evil of dignities*. And when the people would have rejected *Samuel* from being *Judge*, saith God, *they have not rejected thee, but me*. He interprets injuries done to *you*, as done to *himself*; and therefore you have all the reason in the world to be sensible of, and zealous in punishing those wrongs which are done to God. Let me expostulate a little: Shall the least *dishonourable* word against an *earthly Potentate* be punished? and shall those foul-mouth'd *Rabshakehs*, who reproach the *living God* by horrid *blasphemies*, go secure and unobserved? Shall an affront to an *Embassadour* be justly censured as an indignitie to the *Prince*; and shall those who *scorn, defame, injure*, and *evil entreat* the *Embassadours* of God, (who come to them upon terms of *peace and reconciliation* from him) as *carnal* and *Anti-christian*, not be looked upon as wronging God himself, and dealt withall accordingly? I am sure Christ esteems them so; *He that despiseth you*, saith he, *Luke 10. 16. despiseth me, &c.* Shall an *insurrection* in the *State* (and that justly too) be punished as *rebellion*? and shall those who are up in *open arms* against God, and bid *defiance* to his *Ordinances, Word, Ministers* (which have been the *glory and happiness* of the Christian world for this sixteen hundred years) escape without the least censure? Shall a *thief*, who steals to the value of a few pence endanger his life? and shall others *rob God* *securely*, and *without danger*? If you ask how that is, not I, but the Prophet *Malachi* shall resolve you; *In tithes*, saith he, *and offerings*. In a word, shall *schisme* and *faction* in the *State* be punished as *rebellion*? and shall *open heresie* (I speak not of *circumstantial* opinions) in the Church be tolerated under the calmer title of *tendernefs*? I must beg a *παρηγορία*. I cannot imagine what plea can be rationally made for this; either we must say, *The Magistrate is not interested in the care of Religion*, and that's directly contrary both to Scripture *practise*, and *precept*; the Apostle making this the very argument why we should *pray for all that are in authority*, that *we may live not onely peaceably, but in all godliness also*. It is, certainly, the Magistrates duty to preserve Religion, as well as keep the Peace. Or else we must say, that no Heresie wrongs God, and that is to make Religion an *indifferency*, and to cut the sinews of all endeavours after truth. What think you of those damnable Heresies, which *Peter* speaks of? Even *denying the Lord that bought them*, and is not to *deny* God, to *wrong* him? Else we must say, that *we do not know what Heresie wrongs God*, and that's to turn Religion into a light *Scepticisme*, & to make it the greatest uncertainty in the world.

Or



Or lastly, that no Heresie, though broached and owned, is to be observed, and taken notice of by the Magistrate, otherwise then as it hath an influence upon the disturbance of the State; and that seems to me to be as much as if we should say, *The peace of the State ought to be more dear to a Christian Magistrate, then either the truth or the glory of God.* In a word, to punish such as I have been speaking of capitally, is unwarrantable cruelty; but not to restrain them at all seems contrary to that zeal which a *Christian Magistrate* ought to have for God and Religion. I shall end this point with a holy meditation of one of the burning and shining lights of this age; *In mine own wrongs I will hold patience laudable, but in Gods wrongs impious.*

Thirdly, *The impartiality of divine justice*, there is no *μεροπολησια* with God; nor ought to be with you: nothing given so frequently in charge in Scripture that I know of as this, *not to respect persons.* And that in reference to God himself, *Deut. 1. 17. ye shall not respect persons in judgement (for the judgement is Gods): but hear the small as well as the greater.* And elsewhere, *Thou shalt not wrest judgement, thou shalt not respect persons.* And in *Leviticus*, *Thou shalt not honour the person of the mighty, nor respect the person of the poor: neither cowardly fear the one, nor foolishly pity the other; though the poor be especially the Magistrates charge, and it ought to be his care to defend him and pity him, so far as may be sine latione justitie, saith Aquinas.* So in *Exodus*, *neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause:* that is, with violation of justice and equitie. And to name no more; *to have respect of persons is not good, saith Solomon.* The word *μεροπολησια* (if we believe *Zanchy*) is properly *verbum forense*, a word of *Astizes*, & *de iudicibus proprie pradicatur.* *Accepting persons* is a sin incident to those who are employed in matters of judicature, and tranfactions of Law; and is as commonly (I fear) practised, as it is little understood: when Jurours are byassed more by love or hate to the person, then by conscience of their oaths or insight into the cause: when *verdict* is the language of their affection, or præjudice, not of their knowledge and conscience: when the interest of some near relation, or a suggestion from a friend swaies them more then the equity of the cause; when witnesses swear home in one mans cause and wont in another, though they know as much of it, and the case depends on it: when a lawyer pleads the poor mans cause faintly and coldly (though perhaps the most just) the rich mans with abundance of zeal, and heat of passion; all this is a vitious and sinfull respect of persons. And suffer me (*Right honourable*) to be your remembrancer, though I confidently believe you both know these things, and abhor them: when one mans cause is expedited and dispatched upon the bare consideration of some out-

Deut. 16. 19.

Lev. 19. 15.

Aquin. 2. 2.

Exod. 23. 3.

Prov. 28. 21.

Zanch. in  
Ephel. 6. 9.

Lawyers!

ward qualification, (as Riches, Friendship, Kindred, Countrie or the like) and in the mean time, a poor mans case is deferred and protracted: when one mans case upon the like consideration is sifted into, another mans perfunctorily passed over: or the Jurie better informed in one mans case then in another: when one mans case is weighed in the ballance of equitie; a second of prejudice; a third of favour and affection: when of two involved in the same guilt one meets with a milder sentence then the other, as being a friend, or rich, or powerfull, or because of some circumstantial opinion, or the like: when the person commends the case, not the case the person: in a word when any consideration besides the equity of the cause, and justnes of the law, prevails with the Judge in judgement, this is an unjust, and sinfull respect of persons. *God standeth in the congregation of the mighty, he judgeth among the Gods, saith David, how long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?* 'Tis a great and crying sin, certainly, the very ruin of societies: it overturnes, and perverts the end of the Laws, (the protection of which the meanest may challenge as his right) which as they were made, so should be executed, without respect of person. 'Tis a sin, which robs the subject of his liberty and security, and makes him slavish and servile, whilst he fears (if he cannot be assured of an Impartial execution of the Laws) a lesser fault in him may feel a severer hand of justice, then a greater in another. Riches or Honour, Diversitie of opinions, or what ever other circumstances of the person, alter not the nature of homicide, or adulterie, or theft: God is equally dishonoured, the common-wealth equally suffers, the law is equally violated by these sins, be the person what he will be; therefore respecting these must needs be an overthrowing of the laws, and a perverting of judgement. Besides, this sin disposeth a man to other sins, to all kinde of iniquity; *to have respect of person, saith Solomon, is not good, for a piece of bread that man will transgress.* Yea, it lays him open to the curse of the people: so the same *Wise-man, He that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him.* And that which is worse and most aggravates the crime, Judges on their tribunals personate and represent God, and so by respecting persons make God a partner in that sin which he most hates. *Drusus* notes that the Ancients painted justice, *pepto oculis obducto, with a veil drawn over her eyes;* to signifie that impartialitie, which ought to be in the administrations of justice. Judges should be seeing into the cause: (that's the Judges honour and the peoples advantage and security; as *S. Paul* accounted it his priviledge to answer before *Agrippa*, because he knew him expert in all customes and questions; so I am confident

others

*the case, and the Person.*

Psal. 82. 1, 2.

Prov. 18. 21.

Prov. 24. 24.

*Drusus in  
difficil. loc. in  
Deut. 3.*

Acts 26. 2.



others will finde this their advantage from you, Right Honourable) but blinde to the person; knowing, but not partial.

A Judge, saith the Philosopher, is *δίκαιος ἀνθρώπων*, living & breathing justice. The Judges in Egypt vvere painted without hands, and blinde. And the *Areopagites*, vwho vvere Judges at *Athens*, passed their sentence in the night, and had their judicatures in some dark rooms, that so they might not be byassed by prejudice or affection to the person, to give vwrong judgement: and, I question not, but you vwill be found such in our *Athens*. And by thus imitating the justice of God you may hereby,

I. Promote the end of the Laws, and the end of your office, which is the publick security, which is no way better consulted then by justice and equity. S. Austin plainly denies, that ever the *Romane politie* could be called properly a *Common-wealth*, upon this ground, that, *ubi non est iustitia, non est respublica*: he calls *Common-wealths* without justice, but *magna latrocinia*: or, in *Lipsius* his language, *congeries, confusio, turba*: 'tis but an abuse of the word *Respublica*, *Common-wealth*, where the publick good is not consulted by an impartial justice and equity; 'tis but a *confused heap*, a *rowt of men*. Or, if we will call it so at present, it will not be so long without justice: for besides that *injustice* and *oppression* makes the multitude tumultuous, and fills the peoples heads with dangerous designs (*Rehoboam's* oppressing his subjects occasioned the revolting of ten tribes; and it was the injustice of *Samuels* sons (when Judges) which made the people so impetuous in desiring a King.) Besides this, I say, it lays a Nation open and obnoxious to the wrath and vengeance of God; as God threatens to *Judah* in the Prophet: *They* (namely the Princes) *judge not the fatherless; neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them: therefore saith the Lord, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.*

The Law is the pulse of the *Common-wealth*, you may know what temper the body Politick is in by the motions of justice, and executions of the Laws: this oft prevents or diverts the judgements of God upon a nation. *Phineas* executes judgement, and stayes the plague: so the three years famine ceaseth upon *Dauids* executing judgement upon *Sauls* sons. Justice is the best establishment of *Common-wealths*; The King by judgement establisheth the land, saith *Solomon*, Prov. 29. 4. And it is a good security against the proceedings of Gods justice against a nation; Run ye through the streets of *Jerusalem*, saith God, Jer. 5. 1. and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can finde a man, if there be any that executeth judgement, and I will pardon it. This is the advantage (my Lords) the publick will reap by your impartial execution of justice and equity. But

Dd 3

II. You

*Arist. Polit.*  
lib. 5. cap. 7.

*Judges in Egypt.*  
*Areopagites.*

*Aug. de Civ.*  
*Dei lib. 10. c.*  
21. & lib. 4.  
cap. 4.  
*Lipsius de*  
*const. lib. 2.*  
cap. 13.

*St. Austin's opinion*  
*of a Commonwealth.*

*oppression causes*  
*insurrection!*

1 Kings 12.  
1 Sam. 8. 3.

*Isa. 1. 23, 24.*

*Law is the Pulse*

*Num. 25. 11.*  
*2 Sam. 21.*  
14.

I I. *You may with the greater comfort appear another day before the tribunal of Gods impartial justice, to give account of your stewardships. You are set up by God, you judge for him, your authority is from him, that speaks your power, and our obedience; even for conscience sake, Rom. 13. 5. And let me minde you, that your account must be to him, and that bespeaks your care and faithfulness. There is a day coming, wherein all, both small and great, must appear before the judgement-seat of Christ; and then with what judgement you here judge others, your selves must be judged, and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. Then with what horreur and amazement shall an unjust cruel Felix appear a prisoner at the bar, to receive the final sentence of that judgement, at a discourse of which he trembled here, though a Judge upon the bench? How fearfull a thing will it be for such a Judge as our Saviour speaks of, who neither fears God, nor regards man, at that day to fall into the hands of the living God, the impartial just Judge of all the world? How shall Pilate tremble to see Christ then Judge, whom here he judged and condemned? Then shall you, (my Lords) having here faithfully improved that talent of power and authority God hath intrusted you with, receive the Euge of those good servants, Well done good and faithfull servants, you have been faithfull over a few things, I will make you rulers over many things, enter you into the joy of your Lord. I shall end all with that famous Jehoshaphats charge to the Judges, Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord; wherefore let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts. Take heed, for God is with you in the judgement: he is with you, to see and take notice of you, that calls for your faithfulness: he is with you to protect you; that speaks your support and encouragement: And I shall pray, that he would be with you to counsel and direct you, and that will promote your comfort, and the Nations happiness.*

Matth. 7. 2.

Acts 24. 25.

Luke 18. 2.

Matth. 25. 21

2 Chron.  
19. 6.

FINIS.



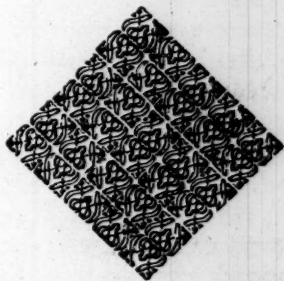
DEI PECULIUM,  
OR,  
GODS PECULIAR  
PEOPLE.

In a Sermon preached at S. *Gregorie's*  
by S. *Paul's*, at the Lecture there,  
*August 19. 1656.*

By JOHN FROST, B. D. and  
late Fellow of S. *JOHNS* Colledge  
in *Cambridge*, and Minister of  
*Olaves-Hart-street* in *London*.

ACT. 20. 28.

*Ut pascatis Ecclesiam Dei, quam acquisivit sanguine suo.*



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*Anno Dom. MDCLVII.*

THE  
GODS PECULIAR

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GODS PECULIAR

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GODS PECULIAR



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GODS PECULIAR



## TITUS 2. 14.

## ΑΑΟΝ ΠΕΡΙΟΥΣΙΟΝ,

*A peculiar people.*

*ΕΙΔΩΝ*, a word invented by the Greek interpreters, if you credit *Stephanus*, upon their authority used by the Greek Fathers, and in this place only by the Apostle adopted into Scripture: it is of near alliance to that other word *ἐκείνου*, which our Saviour useth, *Matth. 6. 11.* which *Hierom* understands of that bread which came from heaven, Christ himself, spoken of, *John 6.*

51. the peculiar nourishment of Saints, fed on by faith. But I shall not trouble you or my self with any nice Criticisms as to the word; but shall engage into what is of substantial and fundamental concernment. And so in the whole verse six things are considerable.

First, *A redemption asserted*, as made by Jesus Christ, *ἐν ἡμῶν*, that he might redeem; the word signifies a redemption by way of price and purchase.

Secondly, *The means of this redemption*, or the price paid in order to it; *ἡ δόξα τοῦ σώματος*, who gave himself; the price was not silver and gold, but *τιμὴν αἵματος*, precious blood, *1 Pet. 1. 18.* Justice in God could require no more; Love in Christ would suffer him to give no less.

Thirdly, *What this redemption is from*; *ἐκ πάντων ἀνομιῶν*, from all iniquities; both as to guilt and power. Whence the Apostle Peter makes the *terminus a quo* of this redemption; our former vain conversation, *ἐν τῇ ματαιῇ ἀναγωγῇ*. For Christ to have redeemed men from the guilt of punishment, and not from the power and practise of sin, would be no less then for Christ himself to have come into the world to have been a cloak and patronage for impiety.

Fourthly, *That to which we are redeemed by Christ*; that is, to holiness and purity. *Καθάρσιον*. Christ purchased not onely pardon, but grace and holiness for his people: that we being delivered, might serve him in holiness and righteousness all the daies of our lives.

Fifthly, *The object of this redemption*, *λαὸν περιούσιον*, a peculiar people:

ple: such as Christ's purchase gave him a *peculiar right* to; therefore 'tis added here, *ἑαυτῷ, unto himself.*

Sixthly, *A description of the persons redeemed, à posteriori, of this peculiar people by an inseparable effect or adjunct: Ζηλοῦν καλῶν ἔργων, Zealous of good works; not cold and perfunctorie, but fervent and zealous in practical holiness.*

Each of these will fill up an hours discourse; I have singled out the fifth as my present subject; to wit, *the persons redeemed*, whom the Apostle here calleth *λαὸν πενίον, a peculiar people*, whence the observation is obvious and plain, that

Doctrine.

God and Christ have a peculiar people in the world.

In the prosecution of which, I will shew you,

First, *In what respects a people may be said to be God's peculiar.*

Secondly, *What this peculiar people is.*

Thirdly, *How it appears that God hath such a peculiar people in the world.*

Fourthly, *Improve all by some application.* For the first, God hath a peculiar people in three respects.

Exod. 19. 5.

I. In respect of *outward dispensation, and distinguishing administrations.* Thus the Jews of old were God's peculiar: his *ἑνός* whom he calls his *peculiar treasure.* God caused his Word and Ordinances to be dispensed amongst them, which the rest of the world were strangers to; he entrusted them with his divine oracles, which the Apostle notes as their *distinguishing privilege* from the Gentiles; and the Psalmist as their *peculiar prerogative.* The rest of the world were like the dry barren Wilderness, they God's Enclosure, his Vineyard, who had plentiful showres of the dew of heaven falling upon them: and so they shall be part of God's peculiar again: the Scripture gives us evident ground to believe their *conversion to the faith*, especially, *Rom. 11.* from verse 23. to verse 28. I think we are much in the dark as to the time of their restitution: I verily believe the Idolatry of Rome (which is the Jews greatest *stumbling-block*) must first be removed, Religion reformed. This may be a digression (however it is but a short one) as to the Text, but not to the Intendment of the *Lecture.* And in this respect likewise the Christian part of the world is God's peculiar, as distinguished from Pagans, and Mahometans, and the rest: in the Christian part of the world, *England* is God's peculiar: in *England*, let me say, *London* is God's peculiar; a place like *Capernaum*, exalted up to heaven in the use and enjoyment of Ordinances; I heartily pray it never have *Capernaum's* doom, to be thrown down to hell for the contempt and abuse of them.

Rom. 3. 1, 2.  
Psal. 147.  
19, 20.

II. In respect of *special office and employment.* Thus Magistrates are

are



are God's peculiar, (he hath honoured them with his *own* name in Scripture, *Psal.* 82.6.) peculiarly representing his Dominion; his Deputies and Vicegerents on earth; they *rule by him*, *Prov.* 8. 15. and should for him; they are his Ministers, *Θεοὶ διάκονοι*, as the Apostle, *Rom.* 13.4. Thus also the Ministers are God's peculiar, in respect of *Function*: as the tribe of *Levi* was under the Law; as being a special right of Ordination set apart for special services. *Separate me Barnabas and Saul*, saith the holy Ghost, *for the work whereunto I have called them*, *Acts* 13.2. which you may see was done accordingly, *verse* 3. by *fasting and prayer*, and *laying on of hands*. The Ministerial office lies not in *common* to all: but there must be such a *calling*, and *lasting function* as *distinct* from the people. You may finde them distinguished expressly, *Revel.* 2.24. *ὑμῖν καὶ λοιποῖς*, unto you, and unto the rest: whence the Ministry in antiquitie is called *κληρῶς*, a *portion*, set a part and dedicated to God's peculiar service, and acts of *worship* and *discipline*; which no other can perform as acts of office. The Magistrates dutie is to uphold, but not to exercise these peculiar acts; which when *Theodosius* the Emperor would have been intermeddling with, he received this repulse by *S. Ambrose*: *ἀλλοτρίῳ βασιλέως ἐκ ἐκείας ποιεῖς*, that, *his scarlet made him a Magistrate, not a Minister*.

III. In respect of *special grace and favour*: though God bear an *universal philanthropie* to all men as his *creatures*; yet he loves some with special love and distinguishing favour: which *David* prayed to God he might have the experience of, *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour thou bearest unto thy people*. Thus God hath a peculiar people in two respects.

*Psal.* 106.4.

I. In respect of *choise and purpose*; so many, who at present lie in *common* with the rest of the world, not yet effectually brought home by the power of God's Word and Spirit, (I mean *elect*ed though *unconverted* persons) are God's peculiar. Many of God's jewels lie a long time in the mire and sink of the world. *S. Paul* was a *chosen vessel*, though at present *breathing out blasphemies and threatenings*. These (me thinks) are like a piece of *gold* not yet refined, but designed by the goldsmith for some special use. These our Saviour speaks of, *John* 10. 16. *And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold*, &c. Whether you understand there the *Gentiles* not yet called home by the Gospel, or all *unbelievers* amongst *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who, in respect of purpose, belonged to the sheepfold of Christ: sufficient it is to my purpose, that Christ calls some, though in a present state of unbelief, his sheep; to wit, in respect of God's secret purpose; *ad arcanam patris electionem hoc refert*, saith *Calvin*. So in a remote potentialitie, which, by vertue

*Acts* 9.15.  
Verse 1.

*Calv. in loc.*

of the purpose of God, and stipulation of Christ, is certainly to be reduced into act; they may be called Christ's sheep, his peculiar which God loves with a love of *benevolence*, not *complacencie*; for so to love any *unholy* person is a *contradiction* to his puritie and nature; the love of election is *amor ordinativus*, not *collativus*, a love preparing mercies for us, not bestowing them: *preparatio beneficiorum*, as *Augustine* calls election, which being an *immanent act* makes no change in the creature, but *distinguisheth* persons onely as to a secret purpose in God.

Rom. 8. 30.

2. In respect of *actual claim and interest*. And thus Saints believers who are effectually brought home, and gathered by the Word, accompanied with the Spirit, out of the world (and this is the fruit of the former) are his peculiar: as our Saviour said to his disciples, *John 5. 19. I have chosen you out of the world*. And these I conceive are meant here, the Apostle speaking of such as are a *purified people*, and *zealous of good works*, the characters of Saints.

And this for the first.

Secondly, *What this peculiar people is*: of which briefly, because I intend the third particular. The Original gives me ground of a sixfold description of them by six qualifications.

1 Cor. 4. 13.

Isa. 53. 2.  
Psalm. 16. 3.

I. An *excellent people*. So the Original in the Text imports, *ἀρίστη, ἀ ἀρίστη, quod est praeferre*, as *Grotius* notes, coming from a Greek word, which signifies *to excel*. So *David* esteemed of the Saints, (however the world accounts them but *ἀρίστη, off-scouring*; and no wonder, for wicked men esteem Christ himself to have no form or comeliness, &c.) as an *excellent generation*. Excellent in respect of that *image of God* they bear, and those relations they stand in to him. *Solomon* passeth the same judgement upon the Saints, *Prov. 12. 26. The righteous, saith he, is more excellent than his neighbour*. Religion and Holiness puts a splendour upon persons, such as even dazzles the eyes sometimes of wicked men, and begets in them, though no true love, yet an awe and reverence, as is evident in *Herod*, who feared *John Baptist*, *Mark 6. 20.* knowing he was a *just man*, and *an holy*.

II. A *separated people*. *Symmachus* explains this word by *ἐκλεκτοί*, that is, *ex numero electum*, one that is chosen and taken out of the number of others. So the Lord hath a peculiar people, whom he hath separated unto himself, both in respect of Election, God, looking upon the corrupted Mass of mankind by a free act of his Sovereign will, pitched his thoughts upon those, leaving these; the first an act of the highest mercie, the other no act of injustice, because God

was



was under no obligation by grace to repair what man by sin wilfully lost and forfeited. *Deus de suo bonus, de nostro justus*, saith Tertullian. Separated again by discriminating grace in effectual vocation: The Lord hath set apart him that is righteous for himself, Psal. 3. And they shall be separated hereafter at the day of judgement; that's the day in which he makes up his jewels, and separates the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the chaff, determining that to the fire, gathering this to his garner.

Mat. 3. 12.

III. A hidden people. So *secreta* signifies, *quasi instar peculii reconditum*: hidden to the eye of the world in their life: for their life is hid with Christ in God, Col. 3. 3. hidden in respect of their comforts, A stranger doth not intermeddle with their joy, Prov. 14. 10. It is the hidden manna, Rev. 2. 17.

IV. They are a precious people. *Quasi charissimas & pretiosissimas opes*, saith Beza. Precious in respect of the price laid down to purchase them; the redemption of their soul is precious, Psal. 49. 8. Precious in respect of their graces; precious saith you read of 2 Pet. 1. 1. Precious in respect of that esteem God hath of them; they are his jewels, Malach. 3. 17. Precious in the eyes of God, Isaiah 43. 4. Precious to God in their lives; and precious also in their deaths, Psal. 116. 15.

V. A rare people. *Quod rarum est, & inusitatum*, that's *selektor*, saith Budeus. Thus the true Saints are but a rare people in respect of the wicked of the world. Christ's flock is but a little flock, Luke 12. 32. Even amongst those who are called the elect are but few, Mat. 20. 16.

VI. A beloved people: so Pagnin translates *אֲהֻבִּים* Exod. 19. 5. *Thesaurum dilectum*, a beloved treasure: so Saints are called, the beloved of God, in the epistle to the Romans, Rom. 1. 7. whom he loves with a special distinguishing love through Christ. God makes demonstration of universal love to all his creatures, Mat. 5. 44. 45. in the exercise of his general providences, upholding and ordering all things as his creatures; so his tender mercies are over all his works, Psal. 145. 9. But the love which he bears to his peculiar is a peculiar love; that the love of a Creatour, this of a Father, that founded in his nature, the other in Christ.

Thirdly, The third particular, *How it appears that God hath such a peculiar people in the world.*

This peculiarity appears,

I. In the distinguishing love of the Father.

II. The special undertakings of the Son.

III. The peculiar workings of the Spirit.

The first of these is discovered seven ways.

1. In God's *special purpose* and *election*. Universal election is a contradiction in *adjecto*: thus God had a peculiar from eternity: *he hath chosen us*, saith the Apostle, *Eph. 1. 4. before the foundations of the world*: and this not upon a *prevision* of any moving impulsive conditions in the creature (for whatsoever good is in the creature, *faith, holiness, perseverance*, are all the fruits of this *electing love*, *Acts 13. 48*. Some goodness in the object must provoke our choice, otherwise it is irrational; but God (who is Sovereign and absolute) chooseth persons to *make them good*, *Ephes. 1. 4.*) but by his own *free and gracious purpose and will*. *Predestinated*, saith the Apostle, *according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*, *Ephes. 1. 11.* and, *according to the good pleasure of his will*, verse 5. That *conditional purpose* pleaded for by so many must necessarily suppose a fallibility in God's knowledge, which can have no foundation in respect of things future, besides the free determinations of God's infallible will. And, supposing God's foreknowledge of things, which the Patrons of conditional purposes, must, and do confess (unless they will *Socinianize*): I do not see (and, I confess, after my utmost search, here I stick) how they can avoid that necessity of *futurities*, which they condemn in others: for God's knowledge is as undeceivable, as his will is infallible: a mistake or error in the one is as inconsistent with divine perfection, as frustration in the other. The *Socinians* indeed easily cut the knot, by denying the foreknowledge of God, and making his knowledge co-existent with the objects known; which is a piece of mad Atheisme, if you credit *Augustin*, *confiteri esse Deum, & negare prescium futurorum apertissima est insania*: (known to God are all his works from the beginning of the world, *Acts 15. 18.*) but to confess God's foresight, and leave all events determinable by the arbitrary indifferencie of mans free-will, is such a piece of inconsistency, as, I must profess, I understand not how it is reconcileable to reason. God hath a peculiar people in respect of his own fore-knowledge; *God hath not cast away his people which he fore-knew*, *Rom. 11. 2.* contradistinguished to the *ἡ λοιπὴ* (*The election hath obtained, and the rest were blinded*, verse 7.) Our Saviour more then once mentions, *John 17. 6.* a peculiar people given to him by his Father, which are peculiariz'd and contradistinguished from the world, verse 9. The fullest Scripture to prove this peculiaritie, is *Rom. 9. 11, 12, 13.* *For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth: it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

*Aug. l. 5. de  
civ. Dei. c. 9.*



2. In respect of *discriminating grace in effectual vocation*: and this in pursuit of and equal latitude with the former peculiarity of election, Rom. 8. 30. These are *κατὰ τὴν προοριάν*, vers. 28. called according to his purpose. That this *GRACE* is given to all, is an assertion so contradictory to the whole current of Scripture, that, I profess, I have oft wondred, that it should have any abettours amongst wise and considerate men. Had the Gentiles this? whom God suffered to walk in their own ways, Acts 14. 16. and who want the Gospel, and the preaching of Christ, and so consequently are without a possibility of believing in an ordinary way; for Rom. 10. 14. How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? Have all within the sound of the Gospel this? No surely: for Christ saith, Matth. 11. 25. *I thank thee, O Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes.* God gives grace sufficient to all men, to leave them without excuse, and vindicate his judicial proceedings against them from all charge of injustice; but that God gives all sufficient grace to elicit supernatural acts of faith, and other graces in order to eternal salvation. I cannot believe, so long as that discriminating Text is upon record in the word, Matth. 13. 11. *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.* And while Scripture peculiarizeth this grace, and determines it to the same latitude with divine purpose and election; God hath called us, saith the Apostle, 2 Tim. 1. 9. *κατὰ τὴν προοριάν*, according to his own purpose: therefore there can be no universal grace without universal election; because the actual bestowing of converting grace is the issue of election, Eph. 1. 3. *κατὰ τὴν ἐκλογὴν*, Who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings, according as he hath chosen us before the foundations of the world.

3. In respect of a peculiar providence of God; whereby he takes care of and watcheth over his peculiar people. God exerciseth an universal providence over the world, Psal. 36. 6. *he preserveth man and beast*; but he hath a special care of his own people; and thus, I conceive, you must understand that text 1 Cor. 9. 9. *Doth God take care for oxen?* that is, not comparatively to the care he hath of his people. When judgements are upon the rest of the world God hath then a special care of his Peculiar, God calls his people his hidden ones, Psal. 83. 3. that look as you hide your jewels in time of plunder; so God hides his peculiar by his providence in times of danger. Thus he hides Noah in the Ark, when a deluge overwhelmed the world; and secures Lot, when fire from heaven destroyed Sodom. David was confident of this special providence of God; In the time of trouble, saith he, *he shall hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle*

*tabernacle shall he hide me, he shall set me upon a rock: and so elsewhere he saith, Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: and, Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies I flee unto thee to hide me. God hides good Josiah, lays him up under ground (as many doe their plate and jewels in time of war) safe from the evil to come. He hides Jonah in the Whales belly from the rage and fury of the waters. Observe Deut. 32. 9, 10. For the Lords portion is his people, he found him in a desert land, in the wast howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.*

*4. In respect of peculiar audience and acceptance. They have, as the hand of God to protect them, and the heart of God to love them, so the eares of God to hear them. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry, saith David. As God hath an open hand to relieve them, so an open ear to hear them: whereas the wicked of the world finde God turning a deaf ear to their prayers; they are but abominations unto him: If I regard iniquity, saith David, Psal. 66. 18. the Lord will not hear me. Quantum a preceptis, tantum ab auribus Dei longè sumus, saith Tertullian. If you aske the English of it Solomon gives it, Prov. 28. 9. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. But now, memoria preceptorum viam orationibus sternit in calum, as the same Father goes on. Obedience procures us audience in the court of heaven; as the Allegiance of a subject doth in princes courts upon earth. The prayer of the upright is Gods delight, Prov. 15. 8. These are Gods peculiar favourites, therefore their petitions are heard, they have a friend and Advocate at Court to put them up and present them, and a promise of audience, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive. If at any time they miscarrie, it is by reason of the unbecomingness of their petitions, either they ask what is not honourable for God to give, or safe for them to receive, at least not at present: or they ask amiss, as to the manner.*

*5. In regard of a peculiar covenant, which God hath made with them: I mean the covenant of grace. Indeed, all professing Christianity are, I conceive, within the covenant, in respect of outward administrations and priviledges; but the benefits of the covenant, remission, justification, adoption, and the rest, belong onely to the elect-regenerate, Gods peculiar. The conditional covenant is in the dispensation of the Gospel offered to all, and the grace of the covenant upon the condition; but there are a peculiar people in behalf of whom God hath undertaken for the working of the condition in them, as well as bestowing the benefit upon them, Jer. 31. 33. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those*



those days, saith the Lord: I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, & they shall be my people. Thus, I think, it may be safely expressed, The covenant of grace is tendered to all, the grace of the covenant given but to some. Gather my *S A I N T S* together to me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice, Psal. 50. 5. Sacrifices were for confirmation of covenants.

6. In respect of peculiar chastisements and corrections. Daily observation tells us, that God afflicts good and bad; but with a vast difference; he afflicts his own people in a special peculiarity; these, as a father his children; wicked men, as a Judge doth a malefactor. Therefore, notwithstanding what some of late have written to the contrary, I cannot submit to call the afflictions of Gods people properly punishments, because they issue not from pure justice, which was satisfied by Christ so far as vindicative, on the behalf of believers: by which though afflictions and death it self were not wholly removed, yet changed into chastisements and trialls. The afflictions of the godly are sometimes the issue of the anger of a provoked father, and that mixed with love: for, *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth*: but not the effects of his wrath as an incensed Judge. They differ as much as a Lord's cudgelling his slave, or a Princes gibbeting a rebel, and a fathers whipping his childe. As *Moses* his rod, out of his hand a serpent, in his hand a rod. To a wicked man afflictions are a *cup of trembling*, fore-tasts of the vials of wrath: to a godly man but a *cup* in the hand of a father (and though there may be some drops of the anger of a father in it, yet with an alloy and mixture of mercy and love) or a *portion* from the hand of our Physician who intends our health. *Augustine* differenceth them, as a *butcher*s cutting the flesh, and the *chirurgions* doing it. God established it as his method of dealing with *Solomon*; and so with all his people. And these chastisements are the badge and cognizance of these peculiar ones.

7. In respect of that peculiar glory God hath designed them to, which is the portion onely of his *Benjamins*. God, saith the Apostle, 1 *Thess.* 5. 9. hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord *Jesus Christ*. It is your Fathers good pleasure, saith Christ, *Luke* 12. 32. to give you the kingdom: which Scripture calls *the kingdom of the world*: laid out for them by Gods electing love; purchased and prepared for them by Christ; they fitted and prepared for it by the sanctification of the Spirit; and at last put into possession of it by Christ himself. This is the peculiar portion of those, who by God were given to Christ, who will see to secure it to them: and

Hebr. 12. 6.

John 18. 11.

2 Sam. 7. 14.

Hebr. 12.  
7, 8.

Matth. 25. 34

Joh. 14. 21.

Coloss. 1. 12

Matth. 25. 34

Joh. 17. 24.

this glory is peculiarly laid out for some; and, if you would know to whom, S. *John* tells you, *Rev.* 21. 27. to such as are written in the *Lambs book of life*.

II. This peculiarity appears in the undertakings of Christ: and here is a four-fold peculiarity.

1. In respect of a peculiar covenant and stipulation with his Father, for the bringing home such a peculiar people, given into his hands as Mediatour; *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God,* *Hebr.* 10. 7. God gave such a peculiar into the hands of Christ, declaring his determinate will for their salvation: and to do this will of his Father, Christ came to the earth, and submitted to all the conditions agreed upon, in order to their recovery; *All that the Father giveth me, saith he, shall come unto me.* And this it is, which Divines call the Covenant between the Father and the Son, as distinct from the covenant of grace made between God and man.

2. In respect of a peculiar purchase, *Gal.* 4. 4. 5. *To redeem them that were under the law:* *Ἐξαγοράζον*; it signifies a purchase by price. Pray, observe that in *1 Pet.* 2. 9. *But ye are a chosen generation, a peculiar people,* *ἡ ἐκλεκτὴ γενεή*; a purchased people, it is in the margins of your Bibles: *populus acquisitionis*, in the *Vulgar*. He lays down his life for his sheep: unbelievers are none of those sheep. It was his Church onely, which he purchased with his own blood, *Acts* 20. 28. Christ loved his Church and gave himself for it, *Eph.* 5. 25, 26, 27. It is his people onely which he saveth from their sins, *Matth.* 1. 21. And where Christ is said to die for all men, and for the world, you are to interpret it of all sorts and conditions of men, of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, in comparison of whom it is evident the Gentiles were called the world, as *Rom.* 2. 15. And as to that middle reconciling opinion, so much contended for at this time, that, *Christ died intentionally for all upon the condition of believing, and yet with a special intention, according to the determinate purpose of his Father, of actual bestowing faith and salvation upon certain persons*; it is, I profess to you, to me (pardon my weakness) a most unintelligible thing, (Will any wise man pay a ransom for a captive, and at the same time intend that the captive shall have no benefit by it? It makes Christs death to be in vain to the greatest part of the world; whereas Scripture tells us, that not one soul shall miscarry, *John* 10. 15. and shall any of those sheep finally miscarry, compared with vers. 28.) unless it be asserted that the condition of faith be in every mans power, either by his natural abilities, which is down-right *Pelagianisme*, or else by some supernatural grace given to all, which is *semipelagianisme*, and both which the patrons of this opinion dis-own. For Christ to die

*John* 6. 39.

*Verf.* 37.

*John* 10. 15.

*Verf.* 26.

*Rev.* 5. 9.



die to establish a covenant with all men, upon an impossible condition, is as much illusory, as if he had not died for them at all: for an hypothetical promise upon an impossible condition is equivalent to a pure negation, as any know who are the least acquainted with the principles of *Logick* and *Reason*. And therefore (till I can see further light to the contrary) I must think it most rational to proportionate the means to the end, and so extend the death and purchase of Christ, to no greater latitude then to the purpose of God, for the carrying on of which it was designed, unless it be understood onely of sufficiency of price.

3. In respect of a peculiar intercession. Christs interceding at his Fathers right hand is discriminate. *Joh. 17. 9. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.* And this I humbly conceive to be a good argument & majori to prove the peculiarity of Christs purchase: for undoubtedly Christ would not have grudged the expence of a prayer on the behalf of those, for whom he shed his blood; for, certainly, Christs intercession is in pursuit of his purchase, the effect of which is the actual bestowing of what he here bought for them by his blood, viz. faith, perseverance, which are the fruits of Christs prayer, as appears by his speech to Peter, *Luk. 22. 32.* Now this intercession is determinate to a peculiar people even to the elect, (and yet is of equal latitude with his death) who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods elect? it is Christ that died, (saith the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 33, 34.*) who also makes intercession for us. And unquestionably had Christ given himself and now interceded for all, all should be made partakers of spiritual saving blessings; for as the Apostle saith *Rom. 8. 32. he that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?* and *John 11. 42. Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always, Non dubito* (saith *Vasquez*) *Christum peculiari oratione & voluntate merita sua illis applicasse qui predestinati & electi fuerunt:* consonant to this is *Iob. 17. 24. I will that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, &c. they determinately, not others.*

In 1. qu. 23.  
art. 5. p. 94.  
c. 3.

4. In respect of peculiar communications from Christ, which proceed from that special relation which they have unto, and peculiar union with Christ, as members to the head: for though there be a laying out of grace for some in divine purposes, yet there is no effectual partaking of it, till actual believing: for communion is founded in union, the bond of which is faith, *Eph. 3. 17.* by means of this union a Christian partakes of grace, of sense, motion, growth, life, from Christ, as the head onely communicates to the united members, Christ is the Saviour onely of his body, *Eph. 5. 23.*

III. This peculiarity appears in the peculiar workings of the spirit, and here is a four-fold peculiarity.

1. In respect of peculiar illumination. The Apostle speaking of the shortness of natural light, as to saving discoveries, 1 Cor. 2. 9, 14. yet adds ver. 10. *but God hath revealed them to us by his spirit, &c.* so in that most excellent Scripture, 2 Cor. 4. having said ver. 3, 4. that *the Gospel is hid to those that are lost*, he adds ver. 6. an intimation of a special illumination indulged to Saints: For (however he dealt with others) *God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* David makes this an argument in begging illumination of God, *I am thy servant, saith he, Psal. 119. 125. ) give me understanding.* A wicked man may have much common illumination, but such as vastly differs from the illumination of the Saints: those puff them up with pride, these humble them; though I confess, this leaven is apt to infect the best, as Paul 2 Cor. 12. 7. Notwithstanding those, the soul stands at a distance and enmities from Christ, nay oft apostatizeth from the profession of him: but these bring the soul effectually to close with Christ; Every man (saith Christ, Joh. 6. 45.) *that hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* That's a head-floating illumination, this an heart-affecting illumination: that, like the light of a glow-worm, which hath no heat in it, this like the light of the sun warmeth and quickneth where it comes: it is called the light of life Joh. 8. 12. it provokes Saints to love God and to trust in God, Psal. 9. 10. *they which know thy name will put their trust in thee.* Common illumination in a wicked man is like the sun shining upon a dung-hill, calls out its stench and corruption, whereas this illumination is a heart-changing and a life-reforming knowledge. See Ephes. 4. 20, 21, 22.

2. In respect of a peculiar sanctification so in the text, *וְאֵלֶּיךָ יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרֵם* *that he might purifie unto himself a peculiar people:* so Tit. 3. 5. *He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the holy Ghost.* Sometimes Gods peculiar lie wallowing in the mire of sin a long time with the rest of the world, in the grossest pollutions, till God by his grace and spirit sanctifies them to himself as a peculiar. Therefore God promiserh in the Prophet his spirit, as *clean water to sanctifie the people*, I am sure so it was with the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 6. 10, 11. *And such were some of you: but how come they to be otherwise? why, ye are washed, ye are sanctified by the spirit of our God.* Christ is made Sanctification as well as Righteousness to his people: Righteousness by imputation, Sanctification by powerfull and gracious energie, and operation.

3. In respect of peculiar sealing. Seals note propriety, we seal what is

Heb. 6. 4.

Ezek. 36. 25.

1 Cor. 1. 30.



is our own. God sets the seal of his spirit upon believers, to note that propriety he hath in them; it is peculiar to such, Eph. 1. 13. *In whom also after you believed, you were sealed with that holy spirit of promise.* So 2 Cor. 1. 21, 22. *who hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts.* It notes that esteem God hath of his people, (we do not use to seal up trifles but jewels which we most value) and his special love to his chosen ones: Christ set his spouse as a seal upon his heart, the seat of love: thus you finde out of every tribe a peculiar number sealed to God, Rev. 7. 5. God seals none with his spirit, but whom he hath sealed with the privie seal of election, of which the Apostle speaks, 2 Tim. 2. 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.*

Cant. 8. 6.

4. In respect of special and peculiar communions with God, Eph. 2. 18. *For through him we both have an access by one spirit to the father: through Christ,* as Mediatour meriting our access to God, *by the spirit* directing and assisting us in our addresses to him: 1 John 1. 3. *Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son;* a thing which wicked men are wholly strangers to; men in a natural condition are described to be *without Christ and God;* that is, can have no communion with him, for, as the Apostle saith, 2 Cor. 6. 15, 16. *What concord hath Christ with belial? what communion hath light with darkness? fellowship with sin, and communion with Christ are inconsistent:* all communion with God is grounded in a covenant-interest: by the fall man lost all communion with God, and cannot be restored to it but through a Mediatour, in whom we have interest upon the account onely of the covenant of grace: but wicked men are *strangers to the covenant,* Ephes. 2. 12. *communion* flowes from *union;* now the spirit being the bond of union must also be the means of Communion, (and this is the Saints Peculiar, whose communion with God here, is mediate in Ordinances, in which a wicked man enjoys nothing of Gods, which is the Saints priviledge here, as immediate Communion is their happiness and glory hereafter, *sed quorsum hac,* may some say: This I shall endeavour now to shew you, by some short and plain Application.

Eph. 2. 11.

First, *It serves to silence those who rob God of his peculiar, or, at least, of his glory in having a peculiar people:* as those do, who assert the death of Christ to have been equally intended for all; those, who lay all the success of Christs undertakings, and of grace offered, upon the arbitrary, uncertain determination and compliance of mans fallible, nay, corrupted, will. By which means it may come to pass, (nay, were it so, it would come to pass certainly) that God should have no peculiar people: for the corrupt will cannot encline to close with grace, till grace subdue the perverseness of it,

Applicati-  
on.

or, to speak the best, should God have a peculiar upon this account, he must account himself beholding to man for it, who determined himself to accept of those offers, all which would otherwise have been in vain and ineffectual. It would be most easie to answer that question of the Apostle, *1 Cor. 4. 7. Who maketh thee to differ?* or, *What hast thou which thou hast not received?* Lord, might the soul say, *I have this actual acceptance of thy grace offered, which I never received.* But Scripture hath taught us the contrary language; *It is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure,* Phil. 2. 13. therefore we cannot will before grace, because grace worketh the will. So to assert any fore-seen conditions in us, as the motives of God's eternal love, is to rob God of the glory which he hath of peculiarizing a people to himself; for, upon this account, God did not choose us, but we him; whereas the Apostle tells us, *1 John 4. 19. We love God because he first loved us.* God loves his people into holiness, not because they were so, either in themselves, or in his fore-sight: no, *When I saw thee polluted in thine iniquities, behold, this time was the time of love,* saith God, Ezek. 16. 6, 8. God could fore-see no conditions as future in his people, but what his own will determined to work in them: and nothing could move him to will it, but free and undeserved grace and love. So, those, who assert the sufficiency of natural light to the salvation of the heathens, pull down God's inclosure, and lay all in common, without any peculiarity of privilege to those who enjoy the Gospel and Ordinances, which in the Apostles judgement peculiariz'd the Jews of old, *What advantage then hath the Jew?* (saith he, *Rom. 3. 1, 2.*) *much every way, chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

Use 2.

Secondly, Let it be a warning to wicked men, to have a care how they in any kinde injure the godly: they are God's peculiar; he hath a special care and tenderness of respect towards them: all the injuries you do them reflect upon God. Thou reproachest and revilest them, nick-nam'st and scoff'st at them, *Isa. 37. 23, 24.* but dost thou think in the mean time that thou reproachest God by this? Thou persecutest them, and dost thou think by it thou persecutest Christ himself? *Acts 9. 4.* Thou oppresseth them, and dost thou think that he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of God's eye? *Zach. 2. 8.* that's a part sensible of the least offence; therefore (saith God, *Psal. 105. 15.*) *touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm.* Let wicked men assure themselves, that the godly, whom they persecute and butcher, will one day be thorns in their sides; they do but kick against the pricks, as Paul, *Acts 9. 5.* What will you do when God comes to make inquisition for blood? be sure God will avenge the quarrel



quarrel of his peculiar ones. God expresseth his care and tenderness of his people, by his *carrying them upon eagles wings*; *Ezek. 10. 4.* It is observed of the Eagle, that she onely of all the creatures carries her young ones upon her wings for their securitie, than who ever shoot at the young ones cannot hurt them; but through her wings; wicked men cannot injure the people of God; but they wound God himself, and will not *God avenge the quarrel of his elect*, which indeed is his own; *yes, he will avenge it suddenly*; *Luke 18. 7, 8.*

Thirdly, *This gives us an account why the world doth not fall about the ears of wicked men.* God hath his peculiar people, and some not yet gathered in: till they be compleated, the world shall endure. If there had been but ten of these peculiar people in Sodom; God had spared it. So soon as *Methuselah* is dead, then comes the flood. Godly men are the pillars of the world, which uphold it from overwhelming wicked men: *I bear up the pillars of it*, saith *David*, *Psal. 75. 3.* God suffers the tares to grow for the wheat's sake, *Matth. 13. 30.* The Saints are the securitie of the place wherein they live; *Sodom* was safe whilest *Lot* was in it, *Gen. 19. 22.* *Israel* safe whilest *Josiah* lived, *2 Kings 22. 19.* *Hippo* could never be spoiled whilest *Augustin* lived, as *Posidanus* tells us in his life: and *Luther*, it is said, while he lived, by his prayers kept off the civil wars from Germany. *Moses* stood in the gap, and prevented the destruction of the murmuring *Israelites*, *Psal. 106. 23.* *Phineas* stays the plague.

Fourthly, *Then censure not the godly, as guilty of unnecessary preciseness, or affected singularity, if they be more scrupulous and strict, and fearfull of sin then others are.* Wicked men strange at this, as the Apostle tells you, *1 Pet. 4. 4.* *They think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.* Beloved, if seriously weighed, it is no matter of wonder, for they have peculiar engagements to holiness upon them: the presence of distinguishing love to engage them against sin; as *Joseph* argues from the special favours he had received from his Master, to the avoidance of injuring him, *Gen. 39. 9.* so Saints from determining love. *Christ* hath redeemed me; and is not a redeemed bondslave under special engagements of homage to his Lord? *What, shall I wound my Saviour by sin, who hath already been wounded for it?* Besides, Saints are sensible of their engagements. No man in the world but hath sufficient engagement upon him to holiness, merely upon the account of Creation, Providences, and common mercies; but their insensibleness is the cause of their unthankfulness: but Saints live in a meditation, and under a sense of mercy, *thy loving kindness*, saith

David

Use 3.

Use 4.

*David, Psal. 26. 3.) is before mine eyes.* Their slips are more dishonourable to God, then the sins of others. God's honour is wounded, and his ways reproached by reason of their sins; therefore in tenderness to the honour of God, they are engaged in a fear of, and watchfulness against sin; besides, they have a principle within acting them to holiness: they have experience of the *beauties of holiness*, and that peace which the practise of it brings in to them: and they have more to lose then others by sin, the sense of Love, the smiles of a Father, the light of God's countenance. They cannot sin so cheap as others can; you may pardon them well, if they fear the loss of their peace, Divine Eclipses and withdrawals; if they dread *broken bones*, which a *David* cries out of, *Psal. 51. 8.* after a wilfull sin.

Use 5.

Fifthly, *Let this lay a threefold engagement upon Gods peculiar;*

I. *Unto thankfulness.* *Psal. 135. 2, 3, 4. Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of our God, praise the Lord, for the Lord is good, for the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.* Special praises should be the Echo of peculiar mercies. You may finde the Church magnifying Christ upon this very account, *Rev. 5. 9.* The Doctrine of *universalitie of grace* destroys all thankfulness, unless to our selves; makes all the sacrifices of praises needless, *sacrificing to our own nets*, applauding the power and freedom of our own wills. It is discriminating grace will raise the soul to thankfull admirations of God, in that language of *Judas* (not *Iscaiot*) *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thy self unto us, and not unto the world,* *John 14. 22.*

II. *To love;* both to God, who thus peculiariz'd you, and to love one another. However your heads may differ, let your hearts unite: you are *Temples of the same Spirit*; spouse of the same husband; members of the same bodie, *1 Cor. 12. 25, 27.* and (what greater argument of love?) you are purchased by the same blood, sanctified by the same Spirit, objects of the same special love; and, I am sure, the Apostle from hence argues strongly for brotherly love: *Beloved, if God so loved us, (saith he, 1 John 4. 10, 11.) we ought also to love one another.* You are *eodem sanguine glutinati*, as *Augustine* expresseth it: and is Christ divided? It is the check the Apostle gives to the uncharitable dissensions of the Church of *Corinth*, *1 Cor. 1. 13.* And lastly you are designed for the same glorie.

III. *To special service for, and obedience to God.* Discriminating mercies are in all reason to be improved as arguments to peculiar services: *Matth. 5. 47. What do ye more then others?*



thers? as if he had said; *more is expected from my disciples, than from the Publicans; as your priviledges are peculiar, so should your services be too;*

For,

1. *This is the proper intendment of distinguishing mercie: the end of God's peculiar dispensations to a person or nation. Observe what God saith of Israel, Deut. 26. 18. The Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people: but to what end? that thou shouldest keep his commandments. Hath God distinguished thee by Electing love? the end of it is thy Holiness: He hath chosen us that we may be holy, and without blame before him, Ephes. 1. 4. Hath he peculiariz'd thee by Effectual grace and Vocation? It is that thou mayst be holy, 1 Thessal. 4. 7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. Art thou Christ's by a peculiar purchase? the end of it is thy Holiness, 1 Cor. 6. 20. For you are bought with a price, therefore glorifie God in your bodies, and in your spirits. Hath God exercised any peculiar providences towards thee? the end of them is thy obedience. The Psalmist having spoken of all the Providences God exercised over Israel, infers this as the just issue of them; That they might observe his statutes and keep his laws, Psal. 105. 45. So God's peculiar Covenant engageth to Holiness, for it is mutual. The end of God's peculiar Chastisements is his peoples Holiness, Hebr. 12. 10. God chasteneth, saith he, for our profit: that we might be partakers of his holiness. And then the hopes of that peculiar Glorie we are designed to, should engage to Holiness, 1 John 3. 3. Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself. The special Sealing of the Spirit tends to this, that we be careful that by sin we do not grieve him, Ephes. 4. 30. so the end of Communion with God is Holiness: what else makes the Angels and Saints in heaven more holy but this? Thus you see, you frustrate the end of Mercy, if it doth not make you more holy.*

2. *It is the most ingenuous return of gratitude, which we can make to God for his distinguishing love. Sins under mercies, as they have the highest guilt, so are arguments of the greatest disingenuitie. What, Do you thus requite the Lord? Deut. 32. 6. Obedience is the best thankfulness: without which our verbal returns for mercy are but a complement. The thankfulness of the life redounds to the honour and praise of God in the world: and this God expects from his peculiar people, if you consult that pregnant Scripture, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Ye are a chosen peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him,*

who hath called you, &c. Otherwise God is thus reproached by your sinfulness: "Yonder's a people who boast of being God's peculiar; do not you observe they live as other men do? they can cheat in their shops, dissemble in their dealings, be frothy and vain in their discourses, live in neglect of Family-duties, as deeply immersed in the love of the world, as compliant with every foolish fashion, as ambitious of honour, as false in their promises as others, whom they censure as of the world and cast-aways. But now saith Christ, *Herein is my Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit*, &c. John 15. 8.

*Question.*

*But how shall I know whether I be one of God's peculiar people, or not?*

*Answer.*

The Text is hemmed in with a double evidence, so that which way soever you cast your eyes, you may discover if you examine impartially. Καθαρόν, and ζηλωτὴν καλῶν ἔργων, *purifie goes before, and zealous of good works comes after*: so that inward Purity, and outward Conformitie, a pure Heart, and a holy Life, are the two special Evidences of God's peculiar: for they are both the issue, and fruits of that faith, whereby we have a peculiar interest in Christ, Acts 15. 9. *Purifying their hearts by faith*; there is the former; and for the latter, Gal. 5. 6. *Faith works by love*.

I. Then, art thou inwardly purified from spiritual pollutions? else thou art none of God's peculiar as yet. *Thou becamest mine*, saies God, Ezek. 16. 8. *What then? Why then washed I thee with water, yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood*, verse 9. Else thou art no branch engrafted into Christ, for every branch he purgeth, John 15. 2.

II. Art thou holy in thy outward conversation? God's peculiar are an holy people, Deut. 14. 1, 2. *For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people*. To pretend to a peculiarity of interest in God, while men willingly continue wallowing in the mire of iniquitie, is a desperate soul-damning presumption. If you would lay any claim to God's privie-Seal of Election, you must bring, and be able to shew the broad-Seal of Holiness. Mark how the Apostle joyns these together, 2 Tim. 2. 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity: yea, and follow Holiness too*. The Apostle speaks fully, 2 Corin. 7. 1. *Let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness*



ness in the fear of God. *Ζηλωτής*, in the Text, *zealous*; not cold or luke-warm, but chearfull and industrious in the practise of Pietie; and thus you may evidence your selves to be of that *peculiar people*, whom Christ gave himself to redeem; so saith the Text, *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquitie, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.*

FINIS.

Gg 2

ned in the form of God, was in the Text, Xanthus, and  
 cold or lukewarm, but certain and indubious in the  
 title of Peter, and thus you stay evidence your selves to be  
 of this peculiar people, whom Christ gave himself to redeem  
 to such the Text, who gave himself for us, that he might re-  
 deem us from all iniquities, and purify unto himself a peculiar peo-  
 ple zealous of good works.

First

Ag 2



THE  
UNHAPPINESS  
of the Wordly-Mans  
PORTION,

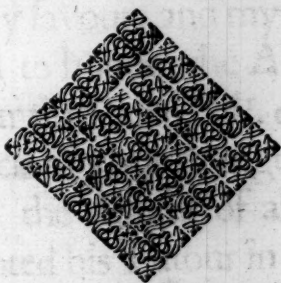
Set forth in a Sermon preached in S. Ma-  
rie's Church in Cambridge, May 25.

Anno Dom. 1654.

By JOHN FROST, B. D. and  
then Fellow of S. JOHNS Colledge  
in Cambridge, and late Pastor of  
Olaves-Hart-street in London.

*Mundus iste periculosior est blandus, quam molestus: magis cavendus, cum  
se allicit diligi, quam cum admonet, cogitq; contemni. August. ad Diof.*

*Quid vis utrum amare temporalia, & transire cum tempore: an mundum  
non amare, & in aeternum vivere cum Deo? Aug. in 1 Epist. Joh. c. 2. v. 17.*



CAMBRIDGE:  
Printed by John Field, Printer to the Universitie.  
Anno Dom. MDCLVII.

Set forth in a sermon preached in St. Mary's  
Church in Cambridge, May 25.  
John Dore. 1674.

BY JOHN FROST, B. D. and  
then Fellow of St. JOHN'S College  
in Cambridge, and late Pastor of  
Christ Church in London.

Printed by John Field, Printer to the University.  
anno Dom. MDCLVII.  
C83



To the  
**WORSHIPFULL**  
CAPTAIN  
**THOMAS OGLE,**  
ESQUIRE,

Increase of Grace, strength of Bodie, and  
perfection of Vertue.

*Worthy Sir;*



Ince it is thought fit by some , at  
the importunitie of many , that  
these Sermons should come forth  
in publick : I have attempted to  
Dedicate the same to you , in re-  
spect of your many favours, and my obligations.  
You were pleased to honour the Authour with  
the tuition of your first-born, Mr. *Ashfield O-*  
*gle*, the excellencie of your strength, the hopes  
of his countrey , the delight of all that knew  
him ; who prevented his Tutour in the heaven-  
ly glory, but he soon follow'd after him : and, I  
trust, as they oft conversed and prayed together  
here on earth , so they are now together prai-  
sing God , and singing *Halleluiah* in heaven.  
Sir,

1  
Sir, the title to these is not unfitly yours; for you are one of those, whose portion is not in this life onely: but you have a glorious inheritance reserved for you in the heavens, through the free-grace of God our Saviour, who came into the world to save sinners; to whose grace I commend you, and your vertuous Consort, and resolve my self,

SIR,

*Your Worships*

*in all due observance,*

JOHN FROST.



## P S A L M 17. 14.

*Which have their portion in this life.*



That there is a providence watching over the world, ordering, and disposing the events, and seeing to the management of things here below, hath been, and is as universal an acknowledgement, as that there is a God. But the mysteriousness of Gods outgoings in his providences hath oft occasioned the Atheisme of some, and the distrust of others: especially in that seeming-unequal distribution of these temporal blessings with a full and liberal hand to the worst of men, whilst the best have no other portion carved out for them, but the bread and water of affliction; as if God had no regard unto the world, but all events happened by careless chance and fortune. Scarce any Question troubled and perplexed the ancient Philosophers more then this; *Quare malis bona, & bonis mala eveniunt?* Why the worst of men often enjoyed the best of the world? this occasioned the Stoicks Fate, and Epicures Atheisme: this made some of them call in question the Justice, others quarrel with the Providence, a third sort to deny the Being of God. To consider that *Licinius* was entombed in a stately marble, grave *Cato* confin'd to a strait and narrow sepulchre, valiant *Pompey* laid in none at all, made them draw this inference, *Credimus esse deos?* shall we think there are any gods? which *Lipsius* saith were *affectuum voces, non judiciorum*. Nay, the Scripture tells us how this hath often occasioned doubtfull repining distrusts in, and shaken the faith of the best of Gods Saints. *Jeremy* desires to enter a dispute with God concerning the righteousness of his judgements in this particular, *Fer.* 12. 1, 2. which hence appears to have been his weakness and infirmity, because in the midst of this distrust he acknowledges Gods justice in all his proceedings. With this *Job* seems to be dissatisfied, and under a present temptation to question God, *Job* 21. from vers. 7. to vers. 16. and the Prophet *Habakkuk*, chap. 1. v. 13. and *David*, that man after Gods own heart, was oft assaulted with this temptation to distrust, upon consideration of the flourishing estate of many wicked in the world, *Psal.* 73. from vers. 2. to the 8. to consider that they were not plagued, v. 5. and he plagued all the day long, vers. 14. This tempted *David* to three great miscarriages;

First, to conceive of piety and holiness, as an useless, vain, unprofitable,

H h

*Lips. Mamud.  
ad Philos.  
Stoic.*

table,

table thing, ver. 13. when he saw *pietie* persecuted, and *wickedness* enthroned.

Secondly, To *uncharitable rash judging of the Saints*, v. 15. intimating his temptation to say so; so apt are men to judge the *straightest* staffe *crooked* in the water, and the most *upright* Saint *hypocritical*, when afflicted.

Thirdly, To *question providence*, ver. 11. as if the eye of God could not see these disorders in the world, and permit them; so liable is the faith of the best to weakness and infirmities: which *David* could not conquer, till he went into the *Sanctuary* of God, and understood the miserable end of wicked men, what-ever seeming happiness they enjoy here, v. 17, and that their *portion* was onely in *this life*, as he saith here in the Text; which words may fall under a threefold consideration.

1. As the *ground* of *David's* prayer for deliverance from his enemies, v. 13.

2. As the *matter* and *support* of *David's* comfort, under the persecutions of his enemies: that though *Saul* (upon whose persecution this *Psalme* was penned, saith *Musculus*) flourish'd and oppress'd him here, yet he had but his *portion* in *this life*, and *David* though at present persecuted and afflicted, supported himself by the expectation of his future glory, ver. 15.

3. As a *description* of the *misery* of *wicked* men, amidst all the pomp, and glory, and enjoyments of the world; while they are the worlds *darlings* and mens *envy*; while set upon the *pinacle* of worldly greatness, here's their misery and unhappiness, they have *their portion* onely in *this life*.

Doctrine.

*It is a miserable thing for men to have their portions onely in this life.* In prosecution of which I shall do four things.

First, I shall shew that wicked men have often the greatest portion in the world.

Secondly, How it comes to pass that they have so, to vindicate the justnes, and equitie, and wisdom of Gods providence in ordering it thus.

Thirdly, Upon what accounts it is a miserable thing to have it so.

Fourthly, I shall improve all in some short inferences, or brief application.

First, To shew that wicked men have often the greatest portion in the world: I need not speak much to this, the experience of all ages since the beginning of the world confirms it, your own observation, I believe, can seal to it; how-ever Scripture abundantly evinces it. The first *murderer* that ever was, carries possession in his very name: *Cain* signifies so much; *Gen. 4. 8.*

Go



Go on in the whole series of Scripture, and you shall finde *Joseph* persecuted by his brethren; *Esau* (as *Rivet* observes on *Gen. 32.*) advanced in the world for a time far above *Jacob*; go on, and you finde the *Israelites* Gods peculiar in captivitie, and *Pharaoh* upon the throne; *Saul* ruling, and *David* in a cave, or in a wilderness; *Job* upon the dung-hill; *Jeremy* in the dungeon; *Daniel* in the den, and the *Children* in the furnace, and *Nebuchadnezzar* on the throne. In the new Testament you have *Felix* on the bench, *S. Paul* at the bar; *Dives* in the palace, *Lazarus* at his gates: *Luke 16. 19.* he cloathed in purple, *Lazarus* in rags, and over-spread with sores; he banqueted and fared deliciously every day, the other desired but the crumbs from the table and could not have them; *Dives* beset with his rich and stately attendance, *Lazarus* hath no other society but the Dogs which came to lick his sores, v. 21. all which *Austin* and *Tertullian*; lib. 4. against *Marcion*, conceive to be a true historie of what was really acted, though others think it parabolical; *Job* tells us that the tabernacles of robbers sometimes prosper, *Job 12. 6.* which prosperity he at large describes, chap. 21. from v. 7 to v. 14. exalted in power, v. 7. multiplyed in their posterity, v. 8. 11. safe at home, v. 9. encreased abroad, v. 10. have their fill of pleasure, v. 12. and wealth at will, v. 13. *David* speaks his own experience of this, *Psa. 37. 35. Psa. 73. 7.* So in the Text, they enjoy not onely common favours, as aire to breath in, earth to walk on; but the treasure of the world, the riches of nature: their bellies are fill'd with his hid treasure, and that not for themselves onely, but for their posterity too, they leave the rest of their substance to their babes, in a word they have their portion in this life.

*Qu.* But who are these wicked men? *Ans.* In a word, Those who have a full affluence of the world and these earthly things, and yet are such as the Apostle describes *Eph. 2. 12.* strangers to the covenant of grace: who can say that estate is mine, and that honour mine, and those lands are mine; but cannot upon any ground say, God is mine, Christ is mine, the covenant is mine, you have them drawn to the life, *Luk. 12. 21.* such who have the world for a portion, but cannot say with *David*, *The Lord is my portion.*

Secondly, They have a portion here upon a five-fold account.

1. As the issue of that universal providence, which God exerciseth in the world, to which every creature owes its being and provision; they are cloathed by the same hand of universal providence, which arrays the lillies, nourished by that bountie, which feeds the ravens, and supplied from that hand, which when God opens, he filleth every living thing with good. *Psa. 104. 28.* God will look to his whole creation, as a Lord provides for his meanest slave, though he in-

tends him not the inheritance. The whole world lives at Gods charges and allowance, as he is the Sovereign and universal Lord, and to the worst of men, for whom he hath not resolved and laid out the inheritance of sons, yet he gives them a *portion here*, as they are creatures. That is the first account.

2. As the result of that patience and long-suffering, which God (while he expects their return, and solicites their repentance) exerciseth towards the worst of men: For though God sometime to demonstrate the just demerit of every sin, his hatred of it, and severity against it, and the more effectually to awaken and deter others from the imitation of it, strikes a sinner in the act of his iniquity; of which *Ananias and Sapphira* for their *sacrilege*, *Corah* and his companie for their *rebellion*, the *children* for *mocking the Prophet*, 2 Kings 2. and *Herod* for his *pride*, Acts 12. are sad Scripture instances; yet it's the more usual method of Gods proceedings, to demonstrate that he *wants to be gracious*, and that *mercy pleaseth him*, and by his *long-suffering* to lead them to repentance, Rom. 2. 4. *Romani non ideo tanti quod religiosi, sed quod impune sacrilegi, neque enim potuerunt in ipsis bellis deos adjuutores habere, adversus quos arma rapuerunt; Arnob. advers. Gent. p. 226.* And to shew that our sins wrest the arrows of his judgements from his hands, he lengthens out his patience to sinners, during which time he often makes them an honourable allowance in the world, the more powerfully by outward favours to win them to himself; or if not, to render them the more *inexcusable*, while by despising that *patience and goodness*, they *treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath*, Rom. 2. 5. As a Judge oft designs a fair allowance for a condemned malefactor, while reprieved by his mercy, till the day of execution, and provides that he starve not in prison. Thus wicked men, though now sentenced and condemned (for, *he that believes not is condemned already*, saith our Saviour, *Joh. 3. 18.*) God gives them a *portion in this life*, to maintain themselves till the day of death, and execution by his justice.

3. As the issue of that *universal goodness and mercie*, which God demonstrates to his whole creation: for, *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works*, Psal. 145. 9. From hence it is that he causeth his *sun to shine upon the good and bad*, Matth. 5. 45. And God oft doth wicked men good by these *outward blessings*, while the enjoyment of them prevents many sins, which *want and poverie* might betray them to: and they, as being of a sordid, base, mercenary spirit, are oft *bribed* by these to give God an *outward observance*, to *abstain* from many sins, and to *comply* with an *outside Religion*, for fear of forfeiting their enjoyments by the se-



verer judgements of God, or some stricter Laws of the Land; & *dum fortunam amittere metuumt, nequitiam derelinquunt*; which is the account profound *Bradwardine* gives of Gods providence in this particular, that hereby they might be encouraged to a compliance with Religion, if not out of love, yet out of interest; if not for love of virtue, yet for fear of loss and punishment, which is the most ordinary principle of mens Religion; for though *meliores sunt quos ducit amor*, yet *plures sunt quos corrigit timor*, saith *Austin*. It is more ingenuous to obey God out of love, but more common to serve him out of fear: thus if not love to Christs person, nor his doctrine, yet desire of the *lawes* will procure Christ many followers. You shall oft see wicked men complying with Religion outwardly upon carnal interest, and for worldly advantages. As a dissembling *lover* covets the *portion* more then the *person*; so do men *court* Religion, to get or keep their portion in this life.

Bradw. p. 281

4. As the effect and issue of Gods *remunerating justice*. There is none so profligate, or debauched, but hath something though not of spiritual, yet of moral and civil goodness, as rewards to which God lays them out a portion here, to demonstrate that love God bears to all goodness where-ever he finde it. The *Pharisees* hypocritical prayers and fastings have their reward here, Mar. 6. 5. *Ahabs* counterfeit humiliation protracts the threatened judgement, 1 Kings 21. 29. *Iehu's* false zeal is recompenced with a kingdome for four generations, 2 Kings 10. 30. So *Ezekiel* 29. 18, 19, 20. *Nebuchad-rezzar* had his reward for serving against *Egypt*. The *Heathens* morality, in *Austin's* judgement, brought them in a double advantage; first, of a lighter punishment hereafter; for *mitius erit*, the *formace* is made hotter for a *Cataline*, then a *Cato*, or *Aristides*: and then with outward temporal prosperity here; for he imputes the glory, magnificence, state, and largeness of the *Romane Empire* to those moral virtues, wherein they excelled other Nations, as love to their countrey, liberality, *divitias honestas volebant*, justice and equity, not enervating their minds, or emasculating their bodies by sordid pleasures, and the like: *quibus moribus meruerunt ut Deus verus, quamvis non eum colerent, eorum augeret imperium*: for these the true God (though nor worshipt nor acknowledged by them) enlarged their Empire & dominions. In a word, as God sees in the best of men some sins to punish and purge, for which he lays them out affliction in this life; so he oft findes some good in wicked men, for which, not as the merit of that good, but as a demonstration of his love to, and to give encouragement to goodness, he gives out to wicked men a portion in this life.

Aug. de Civ. Dei.

Ibid. l. 5. c. 12.

5. As the means of good and spiritual advantage to Gods own people,

people, which next to his own *glory* God designs as the end of all his *providential* dispensations in the world. They are all for the triall, instruction, exercise, and comfort of Gods people; so is this particular *providence* of God, in distributing to wicked men a portion in this life, and that in these particulars.

*First*, As it is a just encouragement to them to go on cheerfully in the ways of God upon an assurance of a better portion in another life; which *David* seems here to respect v. 15. as if he had said, *If they have their portion here, I shall certainly have it hereafter, when I shall behold the face of God in righteousness.* And certainly, if God rewards the shews of goodness in wicked men with a portion in this life; shall he not reward thy *real* holiness with glory in another life? if those who are prodigalls, who run away from God, have the huskes to fill them; shalt not thou have bread in thy fathers house? If *Jehu's* zeal, *Ahab's* humiliation, the *Pharisees* prayer and fasting, though all but counterfeir, go not without their reward in this life; shall thy *true* zeal for God, *heartie* repentance for sin, *severe* prayer for mercy not be rewarded hereafter? Look as those afflictions, which the Saints suffer here, are sure and sad arguments of that eternal wrath and destruction, which the justice of God shall deal out to wicked ungodly men hereafter, as the Apostle evidently argues, *2 Thess. 1. 4, 5, 6, 7.* (Saints, the Jews were wont to compare to *green trees*, as the wicked to *drie trees*, as our Saviour argues, *Luk. 23. 31.* if the Saints (and it is the reason *Boetius* gives, *ut exercitii bonis & malis esset causa supplicii*) be cast into the furnace of affliction, *drie trees*, wicked men, shall certainly be fuel for eternal flames.) so the earthly happiness of the wicked may give the godly assurance of everlasting happiness in another life. Let me bespeak you as did Christ his disciples, *Luke 12. 32.* *fear not little flock*; if the dogs have the crumbs under the table, questionless the children shall have bread. They may divide the kingdomes of the world: well; be assured, *it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you a kingdome* in another. It is an excellent observation of *Calvin* upon Gods rewarding the *Rechabites* obedience, *Jerem. 35. 19. Scimus*, saith he, *Deum saepe mercedem rependere umbris virtutum ut ostendat sibi placere virtutes ipsas.* God oft recompenseth the shadows and seeming appearances of vertue to shew that complacencie he takes in, and ample rewards he hath reserved for true and sincere piety.

*Secondly*, As it is a demonstration of the worthlessness, and vanity of these earthly things: and so alienates and estranges their affections to them. *Parcius solent pii contingere, quò magis illis rebus honos*

Grotius in  
Luk. 23. 31.



*honos & pretium detrahatur, laies Grotius. Hoc est propositum Deo, ut sapienti viro ostenderet hac, qua vulgus appetit, & reformidas, nec bona esse, nec mala, the heathen Seneca gives this account of Gods providence, it is his meaning and design to demonstrate to good men, that those afflictions, which the world so much fears, are not evil, seeing God oft lays them upon the best of men, nor those enjoyments, which the world with so eager desires pursues; absolutely good, seeing they are oft given to the worst, apparebunt enim bona esse, si illa non nisi bonis viris tribueret, & mala esse, si malis tantum irrogaverit; afflictions would appear as absolutely in themselves evil, should wicked men onely feel them, and the world as chiefly good and desirable, should good men onely enjoy it. But this consideration, that the worst of men have oft the greatest portion of the world, how may it deaden the Saints affections to, and quench all intemperate heates of desires after the things of this world, and teach them to undervalue and disesteem those pearls, which they oft see cast before swine. Nullo modo potest deus concupita magis traducere, quam si illa ad turpissimos defert, ab optimis abigit, saith the heathen Seneca.*

Grotius in  
Math. 6.33.

Seneca, pag.  
387.

This providence of God may most powerfully work in us a disaffection to these earthly enjoyments. How should this pull down the towering and ambitious thoughts of men; to consider that cruel Neroes, ungodly Caligulaes, apostate Julians, have oft their crowns and Scepters? How should this take of all immoderate covetous cares for the world, to consider that the fool in the Gospel had his full barns? And this should teach Christians to abhor that foolish affectation of delicious fare, and costly arrayment, to thinke that Dives, now roaring in hell, in his life time enjoyed both these in abundance.

Thirdly, As it is an occasional means of trying his peoples grace, and heightning their glory. *Datur occasio majoris meriti & corona*, is the account *Leſius*, in his tract *de providentia numinis*, gives of this Providence of God. Had no persecuters, no Neroes, no Caligulaes ever flourished, the glory of the Martyrs patience, faith, and constancy had been obscured. As *Jacob* discovered the sincerity of his affection to *Rachel*, that he continued to love her, notwithstanding all the hard usage he endured for her sake: thus the luster of the Saints meekness and humilitie shines through those reproaches and scandals, which the world casts upon them; they are all but foyles to set of the beautie and glory of Christians graces. The portions of wicked men in this life, are especially tryals of the sincerity of a Christians affection to God, and love to holiness; whose soul can burn in a holy flame of divine love, though not fo-

mented

mented, nor cherished by the *fewel* of outward *prosperitie*. That is the *hottest* flame, which is encreased by its contrary cold; thus is the flame of true love augmented by an *Antiperistasis* of crosses and afflictions. It is a kinde of spiritual *simonie*, not love, which must be bribed by these outward enjoyments. And as this tries their grace, so it adds to their glory: *Quantò plus tormenti, tantò plus erit gloria*, saith *Seneca*. The persecutions of the Heathen Emperours added new *pearls* to the Martyrs *crowns*: and the Apostle assures us, that the *light afflictions* which the Saints suffer here, (whilest wicked men oft flourish) do *work out* for them a *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17.

Thirdly, Wherein lies the misery of that man who hath his portion onely in this life. It appears miserable from Scripture; Luke 6. 24. *But wo unto you that are rich; for you have received your consolation.* So, *Wo unto them that are at ease in Zion, &c.* Amos 6. 1. and so it must needs be upon a six-fold account.

I. Because he hath no *real satisfaction* in this portion, as to his *better part*. He vexeth and disquieteth himself to get and preserve his portion, and when he hath done all, he *grasps the winde*, and *courts vanity*: he is filled with nothing but emptiness: *he shall not feel quietness*, Job 20. 22. And being *without God*, who is the onely rest and centre of souls, he is as far from *true satisfaction*, as from *real happiness*. The Gospel brands him for a *fool*, who dream'd of a *requiem* to his soul from his *full barns*, Luke 12. 20. Where there is *satisfaction*, there must be *suitableness* and *proportion*; and that cannot be between the *world* and the *soul*: therefore *dis-satisfaction* is entailed upon the fullest enjoyments of the world, if you believe *Solomon*, *He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanitie*, Eccles. 5. 10. Now I appeal to you, how sad is it for men to have souls made capable of an *enjoyment* of God, and *happiness* in eternity, and yet to enjoy nothing but a *dis-satisfying* portion in this short and vain life. Methinks, the soul of man is like *Noahs* dove: a *wicked mans* soul is like the dove *out* of the Ark in a constant motion and ever restless; but a *pious* soul is like the dove *returned* to the Ark, taking up its rest in God. And herein is the excellencie of a Christians portion, though he hath nothing in the world, that whereas the greatest portion of the wicked worldling brings him in nothing but *vanity & vexation*, a Christian inherits *full satisfaction* in his portion, as *David* adds ver. 15. *I shall behold thy face in righteousness*: there's his, and every Christians portion, viz. *the enjoyment of God*: and then see the *satisfaction* entayled upon this portion, *When I awake* (saith he) *I shall be satisfied with thy likeness*.

II. Be-



I I. Because he enjoys it without the love of God. His portion argues not the truth of Gods love to his person, for being out of Christ, God accepts him not: *Ephes. 1.6.* it is in the beloved onely that our persons are *accepted*: nor doth it speak Gods approbation of their wayes, the holiness and purity of his nature permits not that. What comfort is it to enjoy the world with the frowns and displeasure of God? what comfort in corn, and wine, and oyl, without the light of Gods countenance, *Psal. 4.7.* The sence of the love of God sweetens the least enjoyment and portion in the world: pulse and water are delicious fare with these. Thy loving kindness is better then life, saith David, *Psal. 63.3.* Life is the coupler and cement of all our earthly portions, all is gone, if life be gone: it is the love of God that sweetens that. The greatest portion in the world must needs be uncomfortable without this. For a man to have enlarged and full barns, and with all to have an angry God summoning him with a *Stulte hanc nocte*, how terrible is it and uncomfortable? Yet this is the case of all those who have their portions onely in this life.

I I I. Because he enjoys it without interest in Christ: through whom onely it is that our earthly portions become true comforts and real blessings. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things, *Rom. 8. 32.* Then they are blessings indeed, when they are given us together with Christ; and thus Christians enjoy their earthly portions, as appurtenances to Christ, as entails upon the Covenant, as *weidun*, or *inquit*, as an accession or over-plus, as *Grotius* comments on *Matth. 6. 33* *weidun* *inquit*, to you, who seek first the kingdom of heaven, who have an interest in Christ. How uncomfortable is it to enjoy a portion here, without a part and portion in Christ? look, as interest in Christ sweetens the worst crosses and afflictions of a Christian, (Christ being as the tree was to the waters of Marah, *Exod. 15. 25.* he removes the bitterness of afflictions, or as the honey in the belly of the lyon, *Judges 14.* sweetning the most devouring affliction): so the greatest portion of the world without Christ is a real curse to a wicked man, who (I do not say they have no just right or title to their portions here: for to found Dominion in grace, is to leave the world to very uncertain Owners, and is the principle of oppression and confusion) enjoys no portion in a comfortable manner. Christ is the conveyance even of temporal blessings, when enjoy'd in a sanctified manner, *All things are yours, and you are Christs*, with the Apostle, *1 Cor. 3. 21, 23.* And, truly, to enjoy all things without Christ, is nothing; it is to enjoy the husk without the grain; the shell without the kernel; the bone

without the *marrow*; the *casket* without the *jewel*; the *field* without the *pearl*; and thus do all wicked men enjoy their portions in this life, who, as the Apostle describes them, are *without God and Christ in the world*, Eph. 2. 12.

IV. Because he enjoys no *true real comfort* in his portion in this life. Some counterfeit contentment, and seeming forced joy and delight he may have in his earthly enjoyments: but we may truly say, as Solomon doth, Eccles. 2. 2. *What doth it? it profits nothing*; this comfort is neither true, nor lasting.

And that,

1. Because of the *mixture* of some *crosses*, and many *cares*, which wound and peirce the soul *through with many sorrows*, as the Apostle assures us, 1 Tim. 6. 10. *Vexation of spirit* is entail'd inseparably upon this earthly portion: *Vexation* in the procuring of it, Eccles. 2. 22, 23. What *disquieting plottings* and *contrivances* to get this portion? and when he hath it, how *disquieted* is he; & *distracted*, and divided between *care* to keep, and enlarge it, and *fear* to loose it: besides, how oft doth some outward cross embitter his portion. As the Saints in their greatest afflictions have their *lucida intervalla*, comfortable refreshings, intervals of joy and comfort, (Prov. 10. 22. *The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it*): So he that enjoys the most full portion in this life, meets oft with that cross, which robs him of the comfort of his enjoyments; as the *rich man's* summons, Luke 12. damp't his joy in his *full burns*.

2. Because of the *sting of conscience*: which if once awakened, gnaws, and secretly eats out all the comfort of his earthly portion, whose secret suggestions and whisperings in the fullest enjoyments, oft surprizeth, and fills the soul with sadness and horreur. The *hand-writing* against *Belsazzar* makes him *tremble* amidst all his carozes in the *cups of the Temple*, Dan. 5. 5, 6. *Judas* threw away the *thirtie pieces*, Matth. 27. 5. no comfort in them when summoned to the *tribunal of conscience* as guilty of the blood of Christ. *Multos fortuna libera pœna, metu neminem*, saith Seneca. What *Tacitus* saith of *Tyrants*, is true of all wicked men; *Si recludamur mentes, posse aspici laniatus & ictus*. Though God reprieves wicked men from present execution, yet they are oft disquieted with inward fear: this *vultur* at the heart preys upon their inward comfort, and thus *in the midst of laughter the heart is sorrowfull*, Prov. 14. 13. and the greatest portion in the world is no more solace or comfort, then a velvet slipper to a goutie foot, or a crown to an aking head.

3. Because of the *secret curse of God*, which is entail'd upon a wicked

Senec. ep. 98.  
Tacit. Annal.  
lib. 6.



wicked mans portion in this life; what ever he enjoys he hath the curse of God going along with it; hath he a fair estate? that is a curse to him, *Deut. 28. 17, 18.* Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Hath he plentiful and delicious fare and provision? this is accursed too, *Job 20. 23.* When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the furie of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating. This curse appears sometime in the insensible wasting, and decay of his portion; that the rich worldling puts money into a bagge with holes, *Hagg. 1. 6.* and it runs out he knows not how: sometimes by blasting their comfort in them, stopping them in their most eager carrier, and hottest pursuit of the world; and when they have riches, they have no heart to use them, which *Solomon* takes notice of as the greatest vanity of the world, *Eccles. 6. 2.* It is the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich, *Prov. 10. 22.* From this it was that *Daniel's* countenance, after ten daies living with pulse and water, look't fairer and fatter, then those who eat the portion of the kings meat, *Dan. 1. 15.* So on the contrarie it is the secret curse of God which blasts a wicked mans portion in the world; we read *Levit. 16.* of two goats, the goat for the sin-offering, and the scape-goat; the first sacrificed to God, the other dismissed into the wilderness with all the sins and curses of the children of Israel upon his head: *Origen*, after his usual manner, allegorizing on that place, makes these two goates representations of good and wicked men: the godly, being oft *sors Domini*, are martyred and persecuted, but by it they are made an acceptable sacrifice to God; the wicked (*qui sunt de hoc mundo*) the men of the world, are set at libertie, have their freedom, and enjoy enlargement in the wilderness of the world, but laded with their own sins, and the curses of God upon their heads. And how miserable is this for the Israelites to have Quails, and the wrath of God overtaking them, while they were eating them? *Numb. 11. 32.* for men to have their tables richly spread with dainties, and that table to become a snare to them, must needs be miserable: and yet thus it is with all those who have their portions onely in this life.

Orig. Hom. 9.

Psal. 69. 12.

V. Because he enjoys it to his real hurt and mischief. It was that sore evil which *Solomon* observed under the sun, that riches were kept for the owners thereof to their hurt, *Eccles. 5. 13.* *Periculossissima est felicitatis intemperantia*, saith *Seneca*. *Dives est aliquis malus: habet sibi in curam, angorem, ruinam*, saith the same Author. Wealth is the worldlings vexation here, and ruine hereafter.

A wicked mans portion in the world tends to his mischief four waies.

1. *As it estranges him from God.* We read of the Prodigal, *Luke 15.* that when he had got his portion, he ran away from his father into a *far countrie*, and spent it in *riotous living*, *v. 12, 13.* so doth the portion of wicked men here set them at a distance, and enmitie to God; and truly nothing sooner alienates mens souls from God and goodness, then a great portion in the world. The devil offered this as a suitable temptation to prevail with Christ himself, *Matth. 4.9. All these things, &c.* He hath kept this as his reserve, as his last temptation; if this will not do, he knew his other assaults would be to little purpose. It was a seasonable admonition which *Moses* gave to *Israel*, *Deut. 8. 10, 11, When thou hast eaten, and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee, &c.* there was great danger that the milk and honey of *Canaan* might make them forget God, and again, *Deut 6. 12. Beware, lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.* And this is none of the least mischiefs of that portion wicked men have in this life.

2. *As it betraies them, and laies them open to abundance of sin:* their worldly abundance is but fuel to their lust, exalts them in pride, as the Psalmist saith, *Psal. 73. 5, 6.* As *Alexander's* victories caused him to subscribe himself, *The son of Jupiter*; it heightens them into contempt and forgetfulness of God, *According to their pasture, so were they filled: they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten me,* *Hosca 13. 6.* It oft makes them more hardened at heart, and resolved in sin; & with *Pharaoh* to say, *Who is the Lord that I should obey him?* *Exod. 5. 2.* It makes them unfruitfull under the means of grace, as *Luke 8. 14. the seed that fell among thorns* is expounded of them that are choaked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life. It betraies them to idleness, as you may see it did *Sodom*, *Ezek. 16. 49.* Common experience tells us that is the mother, and nurse of all impiety; God knowing this, oft (as a wise Phyfitian opens a vein to prevent a disease) cuts short his own people as to their portion in this world; lets them bloud in their estates and honours, to prevent in them those sins, which the wicked mans abundance solicites and betrays him to.

3. *As it imbitters every affliction, and makes death more terrible* O death! how bitter is the remembrance of thee, to a man that lives at rest in his possessions? to a man that hath nothing to vex him, & hath prosperitie in all things? O death, acceptable is thy sentence to the needy, *Ecclesiasticus 4. 1, 2.* which place though I dare not adopt into Scripture, yet I dare take it for a certain truth. Affliction dis-

quiet



quiets him, and death terrifies him; he is building *Tabernacles* here, and enlarging his barns, and hugging his present enjoyments in this life, *quam solum suam vitam putant, qui eternam desperant*, saith *Augustine* upon my Text. And, truly, they must needs tremble to part with their portion in this life, who despair of getting any portion in another.

4. As it encrease his wo, and undoes his soul to eternitie. The prosperitie of fools shall destroy them, saith the *Wise-man*, Prov. 1. 32. The abuse of his earthly portion will render him the more inexcusable at the last day: and how sad is it to treasure up the world, and wrath together? As it is comfortable for Christians to consider that all their afflictions here will encrease their future glory, when every tear they have here wept shall turn into a pearl to beautifie and enrich their crown: so it is miserable to think how the wicked mans present prosperitie shall afterward encrease his misery. That's a terrible place, *Revel. 18. 7.* How much she hath glorified her self, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: the very remembrance of which will be part of hell to him. How will that strike him to the very heart, *Luke 16. 25.* Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivdest thy good things, &c? and that's the last account I shall give you of this mans miserie, who hath his portion onely here.

Rom. 2. 4.

VI. Consider the miserable portion such a man shall have in another life which Scripture acquaints us with, *Psal. 11. 6.* Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup: and 'tis parabolically exprest in *Mat. 24. 51.* He shall be cut asunder, & his portion appointed him, &c. then shall he wish he had gone without a portion in this world; then shall many an unjust *Ahab* curse the day that ever he had any thing to do with a *Naboth's vine-yard*. Then shall many an *Ananias* & *Sapphira* curse the day in which they enriched themselves by sacrilege; when those hands shall burn in eternal flames, which here fingered that fewel which should have kept the fire alive upon the Altar. Then shall an unjust *Felix* curse his bribes, and oppressours their extortion, covetous worldlings their usurie, and cunning Merchants their gains, their cheats and over-reaches in trading. And, how miserable do you conceive their case to be? when many a *Dives*, who here is arrayed in purple and silk, shall there lye down clothed and enwrapped in flames: when many who here inhabit the statelyest palaces, shall there dwell with everlasting burnings, *Isa. 33. 14.* when many who here fare deliciously every day, shall then with *Dives* call for, and that in vain too, a drop of cold water, *Luke 16. 24.* when many who here chaunt to the sound of the

viol, as in *Amos* 6. 5. that take the timbrel, and the harp, and rejoyce at the sound of the Organ, as *Job* describes them (*chap.* 21. 12.) shall have no other musick, but the weepings and howlings, and gnashing of teeth of damned wretches. This miserable portion of wicked men is that which Scripture oft suggests to us, as the account of God's providence in dealing them out a portion of the world here, and as a means of conquering all distrustfull repinings: to this *Job* refers us, *chap.* 21. 30. *The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction: they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath: and David Psal.* 37. 35. 36. *I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree: yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.* David overcame his temptation, when he went into the Sanctuary, and understood the end of these men, *Psal.* 73. 17. that God had set them in slippery places, and so being the higher, they were in danger of the greater fall, *verse* 18, 19. and that their present happiness was but as a dream, *verse* 20. short and deceitfull. Give me leave to allude to that place, *Genes.* 48. 13, 14. when *Jacob* was to bless *Joseph's* sons, *Joseph* set *Ephraim* on his left hand, and *Manasseh* on the right; but *Jacob* on the contrary laid his right hand on *Ephraim*, and his left on *Manasseh*: many who are here set on the right hand of the world, enriched with the greatest blessings it can afford, shall at the last day be set on Gods left hand, and be dispatched with that sentence, *Go ye cursed*, *Matth.* 25. 41. and those whom the world sets on her left, as scorned and contemned, shall be found amongst those on Gods right hand, who shall receive the blessing, and the kingdom of their Father, *vers.* 34. I hope this is sufficient to clear up the providence of God, and to demonstrate the miserie of wicked men, having onely a portion in this life. I beg leave to illustrate all with a relation out of profound *Bradwardine*, and so I shall conclude this doctrinal part. The relation is of a certain Hermite, who was tempted to blasphemy, as conceiving the judgements of God unjust; in that he saw the wicked prosper, and the righteous afflicted: in which distrust there appeared an Angel sent from God to him in the shape of a man, bespeaking him thus, *Follow me* (saith he) *and thou shalt see the hidden judgements of God*: whom the Hermite obeying followed to the house of a very religious man, who received them with much courtesie all night, they departing the next morning the Angel took away a cup which the good man much affected, and gave it to a very wicked man, with whom they lodged the next night; the third night they were received by a very godly man, whose servant the Angel in the morning drowned in the well; the fourth night being entertained courteously by a very religious host,



host, the Angel slew his childe, at which the Hermite much wondering desired to depart, the Angel told him he was sent from heaven to discover to him the hidden mysteries of providence: I took away the cup from the first man, because his affections were too much set upon it, I gave it to the wicked man ut mercedem suam recipiat in præsenti, that he might have his reward here in this life; I drowned the servant of the third host, because he had it in his heart to kill his master; so I preserved the godly man from death, and the ungodly man from committing that sin, by which means he is less punished in hell; I slew the fourth mans childe, because before he had a childe, he gave many alms, therefore I took away the childe, and carried that into heaven, and so removed the occasion of the good mans covetousness. I hope the reverence of the Authour from whom I borrowed it, & the congruity of it to my present subject will be sufficient Apologie for the length of this relation: it acquaints us with the end and design of God's providences; he sometimes cuts his own people short in the world to prevent their sin, to cure their corruption, to alienate their affections from the world, and oft gives to the worst of men, that they may have their reward, their portion onely in this life.

*Application.*

Have the wicked oft a portion in the world? then,

First, Take hence an assurance of a future judgement. Wicked men have their portion here: but the justice of God permits not that it should be always well with them; his goodness here lays them out a portion, but his justice will lay them out hereafter a punishment: I have Commission to assure the righteous it shall be well with them, how-ever they fare here, Isa. 3. 10. and to speak a woe to the wicked, for it shall be ill with him, how prosperous soever his condition be here: For the reward of his hands shall be given him, ver. 11. God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, Acts 17. 31. not then to correct the obliquities of his present providential proceedings (for Gods will being the first rule and adequate measure of rectitude, his way must be just, when most secret) but to clear up the equitie of them to the world, to vindicate them from that challenge and imputation of injustice, which the ignorance, infirmity, or malice of men might here lay upon them, then all those mysterious providences, which men are apt here to quarrel with, and censure as not just and equal, shall be unveiled and discovered: therefore the Apostle calls it *ἡμέρα ἀποκαλύψεως*, Rom. 2. 5. The day of the revelation of the righteous judgement of God: then as the Prophet Malachy saith, chap. 3. 18 we shall clearly discern between the wicked and the righteous, though here oft through the promiscuous, mysterious

mysterious dispensations of God, we cannot difference him that *serveth* God, and him that *serveth* him not.

Secondly, Let Christians learn hence *to live by faith*. This is one end of Gods dealing out a *large portion* of the world to wicked men, while his own people are *in want* and *afflicted*, to teach them to wait by faith and in dependance upon God for that portion he hath treasured up for them in heaven. God suffers the *bricks* to be *doubled* in *Egypt*, that so his people might the more *long* for, and by faith *live* upon the promise of *Canaan*. A Master or Lord pays his *slave* his present *wages*, while he cuts his son *short* in his *allowance* during his *non-age*, that he may learn to depend upon his father for the inheritance. Thus doth God, the great Lord of all, deal with his *slaves*, who serve him for the *hire* of some *temporal* advantage, he gives them their *present reward*, and *wages*; but though his goodness hath determined a better portion to be a reward to the *pietie* and *obedience* of his *children*; yet he gives it them *in reversion*, little *in hand*, that they may learn to live upon the *promise*, and by faith to depend on the *goodness* and *faithfulness* of their Father for their heavenly inheritance; that they walking not by *sight*, but *faith* (which is a Christians work and condition here) may not *look at the things which are seen*, &c, 2 Cor. 4. 18.

Thirdly, *Envy not wicked men their portion*. This is *Dauids* inference, Psal. 37. 1. *Fret not thy self because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity: for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb*: and more fully, Psal. 49. 16, 17. *Be not thou afraid when one is made rich; when the glory of his house is increased: for, when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him: thou shalt go out of the world as rich as he, and much more happy: and vers. 18. Though whiles he lived, he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee when thou doest well to thy self: hee'l have little reason to boast of it in another life; it is but a fools paradise he is in here, and falsa felicitas ipsa est major infelicitas*, saith *Austin*. His conceived happiness ushers in his greater misery. I would envy that man no more, then I would a *reprieved malefactor*, whom I see gratifying his *palate* with the most *delicious* fare, or having his way to the *gibbet* strewed with *roses*, who merits *pitie*, not *envy*.

Fourthly, This should teach Christians *contentedness* with whatever allowance they have in the world; it is a *wicked mans portion*, a *Christians viaticum*, S. Paul had learnt this lesson thoroughly, Phil. 4. 11, 12. *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content*. And, truly, Christians have all the reason in the world to learn *contentation*; while, though others have the

many

*August. in  
Psal. 30. 1.*



many things of the world, thou, with Mary, hast the better part; though poor in the world, yet rich in faith, therefore heir of a kingdom, *Jam. 2. 5.* That, though accounted *dei Inimica*, the off-scouring of the world, yet one of Gods jewels, *Malach. 3. 17.* If thou hast none, or a small portion in the world, yet if thou canst say, *The Lord is my portion*, with David, thou hast reason to be satisfied. Seneca brings in God answering the discontents of vertuous men thus, *Illis bona falsa circumdedit, & animos inanes velut longo fallacique somno lusi*; I have given them (meaning vitious men) these counterfeits good things, and they lie in a deceitful short dream of worldly happiness; *auro illos, argento, & ebore ornavi, intus nihil boni est*; they are outwardly adorned, but inwardly defiled, and abominable, as *vobis dedi bona certa & mansura*; but you have the true and permanent good; *non egere felicitate felicitas vestra est*; it is your happiness that you stand not in need of these worldly things to make you so. Check then (O Christian) the rising discontents of thy soul from the want of the world, as Elkanah did the repinings of Hannah for her want of children, *1 Sam. 1. 8.* Is not thy portion in God better to thee (O Christian) then ten, then a thousand portions in the world: thou maist say as David did, *Psal. 16. 6.* The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

Seneca pag.  
289.

Fifthly, Hence, Christians, learn submission under the losses, and patience under the crosses of this world. *Fustis quidquid malorum ab iniquis dominis irrogatur, non est pana criminis, sed virtutis examen*, faith Austin: omnia mala exercitationes putat. Crosses are but trials of his patience and constancy. 'Tis no wonder to see wicked men repining and desponding at the loss of earthly things, they are their portion, they look for no other; but Christians should learn patience and submission, as the deportment which is most suitable to their hopes of a portion in another life: Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things: now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible, *Rom. 9. 25.* Upon this future portion when Moses had fixt his eye of faith, he chose afflictions, scorned the profits, and disrellisht the pleasures of the world; as you may read in *Hebr. 11. 25, 26, 27.* *ἀντιδραστής τῆς τῆς μακαριότητος*, he had respect to the recompence of reward: and David here comforts himself with this, *ver. 15.* As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness, &c.

Aug. lib. 9.  
cap. 3. de  
Civ. Dei.

Sixthly, This regulates our judgements concerning true happiness: we are very apt to mistake here. As Samuel viewing the beantie and stature of Eliab, would have him annointed and the crown set on his head; when yet God had design'd the kingdom for little despised David at the sheep-fold: thus are men apt to set the crown of happiness on those, who are most enriched, and highlyest honou-

1 Sam. 16.  
6, 12.

red in the world, and think those the onely happy men: when yet in truth, if wicked men, they are most miserable, as having their portion onely in *this life*. Therefore David seems to correct his judgement of happiness, Psal. 144. 15. *Happy is that people whose God is the Lord.*

Seventhly, This may instruct our *charity*, and teach us to do good to our very enemies: it is but to write after Gods own copy, who oft gives the worst of his enemies a portion and *almes*: here and our Saviour urgeth this as a *motive* and *incentive* to our charity; and a *pattern* for our imitation, Matthew 5. 44, 45. *I say unto you love your enemies, &c. that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:* for *children*, is read in some copies *enemies*, like, as Gro-tius observes; which intimates Gods *universal goodness* displayed in his *general providence*, as a *pattern* and *rule* for our charity even to our enemies.

Eighthly, This discovers that *rotten foundation*, upon which many men build their *hopes* of heaven. Surely, (are many ready to argue) if God did not love me, he would not give me such a portion in the world: deceive not thy self in a matter of so great concernment, Thou maist as well say God loved Judas, because he had the bags, or Devils because he sared deliciously, who is now roaring in hell. No, these earthly things are but the *crumbs*, which God doth oft cast to the *dogs*, as Luther saith the whole Turkish Empire is no more; the *barks* which the *swine* feed on: take the judgement of the wisest of men, Solomon, and you'l see the rottenness of this foundation, Eccles. 9. 1. *no man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before them.*

Ninthly, Let this awaken us all to a *serious tryall* and *examination* of our selves this day, whether we be of the number of those who have their portion onely in *this life*: the greatest part of the world are of this sort. But you'l say, *Indeed this is worth enquiry into, but how shall a man discern and know this.* I answer, If you examine these three things.

I. How cam'st thou by that portion in the world which thou hast? or, How hast thou increased it? Art thou exalted upon the *ruins* of others? Have thy *advancements* in the Church come in by *simonie*? or is thy estate increased by *fraud*, *oppression*, and *grinding the faces of the poor*, by *rapine*, *extortion*, *cheats*, and *over-reaching in thy trading*? hast thou possessed a *Nuboth's vineyard* by violence? I must take the boldness to say as Nathan to David, *Thou art the man*: without *repentance* and *restitution*, (and truly the first will be but counterfeit and hypocritical without the other; we read Zac-chaeus, Luke 19. restored *four-fold*) thou art the man that hast thy portion onely in *this life*. O my soul come not thou into their secret, who



who by *injustice* and *deceit* hoard up a portion in *this life*, with the loss and forfeiture of their *eternal inheritance*: and thus it is Jer. 17. 11. *As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not: so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.*

II. *Examine thy affections.* After what doth the violence of thy desires run? upon what is thy delight fixt? what sads and disquiets thy soul most at the loss of it? what ever that is that is thy portion. It is a standing rule of triall, which our Saviour lays down, Matth. 6. 21. *Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also.* Mens hearts and affections will discover what's their portion. God was Davids portion, Psal. 119. 57. how did David discover this? by his longing and breathing after him, Psal. 42. 1. above what ever was either in heaven or earth, Psal. 73. 25. by his delight and rejoycing in him, all the encrease of corn and wine, and oyl could not fill Davids soul with so much gladness, as one glimpse of the light of Gods countenance, Psal. 4. 7. and nothing filled his soul with so much sorrow, as the loss and with-drawings of God, Psal. 42. 4. and, *Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and shut up his loving kindness in displeasure?* Psal. 77. 7, 8, 9. But now you shall see quite contrary affections in that worldling, Luke 12. 18, 19. his plottings are how to enlarge his barns, his souls requiem, joy, and delight is taken up in these worldly enjoyments. Abab is displeased and sad, if he cannot have Naboths vineyard, 1 Kings 21. 4. Haman is enraged for want of Mordecai's bowed knee, Esther 3. 5. *Portio cuiusque dicitur, in quo felicitatem suam quisque locat,* saith Calvin: and do not most mens carking-care for the procuring inordinate delight in the enjoying, distrustfull fear of losing, and repining sorrows for parting with the world, speak that it is their portion, and their happiness?

III. What use and improvement do you make of your earthly enjoyments? are they cords of love to God? engagements to obedience? encouragements and enablements to do God more service? Doeſt thou rejoyce in them as giving opportunities to do more good to others? Canst thou say they are arguments and motives with thee to walk chearfully vvith God? They are thy viaticum to a better inheritance; but if thou useſt, or rather abuseſt, thy riches to luxurie and riot, thy power to tyranny and oppression, thy beauty as a bait to uncleanness, thy learning in patronage of error and opposing the truths of God? If thy worldly enjoyments draws thee from thy obedience to God, as fat pastures make beasts more unruly? If with *Feshurun*, Deut. 32. 15. thou waxest fat, and kickest against God, sadly think of it, without repentance thou art the man, who hast thy portion onely in *this life*. The sum then is, whoever gets his earthly porti-

on unjustly, affects it inordinately, useth it unfruitfully and ungodly, he is the man, whose misery it is to have his portion in *this* life.

Tenthly, *Christians, prize your portion.* Though you have little or no portion in the world, there is an excellency in a Christians portion above what is to be found in the largest portions of the world, which wicked men enjoy.

Eleventhly, Let us all seriously set upon it this day, to treasure up a portion to our selves in another life: to take our Saviours advice, Matth. 6. 20. to lay up for our selves treasures in heaven. To you especially I speak, who have the largest portion in this world: none so apt to neglect the thoughts and care of heaven, as those who have most upon earth, as being immers'd in worldly pleasures, and on every hand beset with temptations to sin, and solicitations to forget God. Luther was wont to resolve, *se nolle sic satiari*, that God should not put him off with an earthly portion. That you may get a portion hereafter, take these directions.

First, Make it your first and chief business to lay up a portion in heaven. 'Tis the most compendious way to get a portion in the world, Matth. 6. 33. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;* You will be every way gainers by it even in this life, for all these things shall be added unto you, cast in as an addition and over-plus, (Solomon had riches and honour cast in as an additional over-plus to that wisdom he asked of God) or else the sanctified use of thy little portion in this life, and, as in Prov. 15. 16, *Better is little with the fear of the Lord, then great treasure and trouble therewith:* and Prov. 16. 19. *Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, then to divide the spoil with the proud.* Thou shalt have the world so far as it is good for thee, and that little thou hast shall be filled up with the blessings of God here, and in the other life too: Godliness hath the promise of both: 1 Tim. 4. 8. *Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come:* of the one absolutely, and the other conditionally.

Secondly, Live suitably to the nature and expectations of a portion in another life, that is, holily: without this holiness no man shall ever see the face of God, Hebr. 12. 14. and that's the portion of Saints hereafter, as appears vers. 15. after my Text, David opposing this to that portion the men of the world have in this life.

Thirdly, Get a portion of grace here treasured up in your hearts: Psal. 84. 11. *The Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory:* not one without the other, all the glory in the world without grace will not entitle us to glory hereafter: Let us then labour to make sure of God as our portion in *this* life, that in another life he may be our exceeding great reward.

FINIS.



# SALVATION

BY  
CHRIST

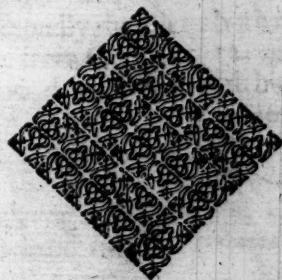
*The Summe of the*  
GOSPEL.

A Sermon preached in S. *Benedict's* Church  
in Cambridge, May 27. 1655.

By JOHN FROST, B.D. then  
Fellow of S. *Johns* Colledge, and  
late Preacher in *Olaves-Hartstreet*  
in London.

Luke 19. 10.

*The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*  
*Nulla causa veniendi Christo Domino, nisi peccatores salvos facere:*  
*Tolle morbos, & tolle vulnera, & nulla erit causa medicina.*  
August. ferm. 9. de verb. Apon.



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Anno Dom. MDCLVII.

# SALVATION

CHRIST

John 3:16

1652

Assembled in the Church  
in Cambridge Mass. 1652

By JOHN FROST

Believer of 30th Nov. 1652

and Pastor of the Church

in Cambridge

1652

The first meeting of the Church  
in Cambridge Mass. 1652  
The first meeting of the Church  
in Cambridge Mass. 1652  
The first meeting of the Church  
in Cambridge Mass. 1652



Printed by John F. Frost

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in Cambridge Mass. 1652



## T I M. I. 15.

*This is a faithfull saying, and worthy of all ac-  
ception, that Christ Jesus came into the  
world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*



One can set an *higher estimate* and *value* upon *mercia*, then those who have the *deepest sense* of their own *sin* and *misery*. Christ is more *pre-  
tious* to none, then to souls who have been *true-  
ly humbled* for *sin*. The *revelation* of *Gospel-  
grace* is not so *acceptable* to any, as to those who see themselves *condemned* by the *Law*.

Thus *S. Paul* here reflecting upon his former *sin*, ver. 13. how doth he exalt the *mercy* of *God*, and the *grace* of *Christ*, ver. 14. *as if* he wanted expression: and that *Gospel-doctrine*, That *Jesus Christ* came into the world to *save sinners* (of which he now saw himself to be the *chief*) which the *Jews* *scoffe* at, the *Greek* counts *foolishness*, the *Atheist* *derides*, the *Pharisaical* *Justiciarie* *undervalues*, to him is *most* *dear* and *valuable*, *the most acceptable message*, &c. Which words in their relative con- sideration seem to refer to ver. 12. as a *vindication* of his *Apostle-  
ship* and *Ministry* from that *prejudice* and *calumnie* of those who objected his *former persecution* and *blasphemie* to him, as a charge upon his *present Ministry*. The *Apostle* first acknowledgeth the charge, ver. 13. and secondly, he asserts both *right* to, and *ability* for the *Ministry* to be from *God*, ver. 12. and thirdly, he lays down the *reason* of *Gods* dealing thus with him, ver. 13, 14. and lest perhaps some might think this *false*, or *impossible*; 1. he *demonstrates* the *truth* of his *conversion* by the *fruits* and *effects* of it, *Faith*, and *Love*, ver. 14. and, 2. the *possibility* of it from the *general end* of *Christs* coming into the world, which was to *save sin-  
ners*, *ἀμαρτωλούς*, which word signifies *notorious*, *infamous sinners*, that's in the Text, *This is a faithfull saying*, &c. That's the *cohe-  
rence* of the words, in which observe three things;

First, A *preface*, *πιστὸς ὁ λόγος*, *καὶ πολὺν ἀποδοχὴν ἔχει*, *This is a faith-  
full saying, and worthy of all acception.*

Secondly, A *Doctrine* or *proposition*, *Χρὶς ἦν ἐκ κόσμου ἵνα σώσῃ τὸν ἁμαρτωλόν*, *Jesus Christ* came into the world to *save sinners*.

Thirdly, The *proof* of the *proposition* by a *Particular accommo-  
dation*

dation to himself, *ὃν πρῶτος εἰμι ἐγώ*, of whom I am chief. And his example was, as he tells you, ver. 16. a pattern of that mercy, which God through Christ would manifest to other sinners.

In the *Preface* four things are held forth.

I. The truth and certainty of the Gospel. *πιστὸς ὁ λόγος*, which is the same with *βεβαιός* or, *ἀληθής*: an expression much used by the Apostle, *quoties aliquid magni momenti adfert, cui fidem adstruendam putat*, as *Heinsius* observes. The Apostle useth it here, to secure Christians from those doubts which their own hearts, or false Apostles, or justiciaries, or legalists might object against the certainty of mans salvation by Christ. *Is dignus, cui fides habeatur ut qui fallere non potest*, saies *Beza*.

II. The worth and excellency of Gospel-revelation. *That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners* is *πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, καὶ πάντων ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιός ἐστι*, a faithfull saying, and worthy of all acceptation. *πιστὸς ὁ λόγος* *Sermonem non quemvis, sed eximium, & selectum declarat*, saith *Beza*; a choice truth the summe and substance of the Gospel.

III. That esteem, and entertainment, which the Gospel deservedly calls for from Christians. It is not onely *πιστὸς λόγος*, that is, *non tantum sententia vera, sed digna qua fiat plurimi*, saith *Grotius*: not onely a true sentence, but most worthy also of our highest esteem and valuation: and not onely so but *ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιός ἐστι* worthy of our acceptation too. *Ἀποδοχῆσαι* is *aliquid avidè arripere*, saith *Musculus*; as a poor man will money, or a hungry man his meat. Nay further, the Apostle, by all means endeavouring to provoke us to an entertainment of the Gospel, said it is *πάντων ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιός ἐστι*, *ut nihil relinquat quod sit avidius acceptandum quàm Evangelium Dei de peccatorum allata salute per Christum*, saith *Musculus* on the place. So that imagine the greatest, and most readie entertainment any thing in the world meets with from carnal hearts, gold to the covetous, &c. the Gospel deserves a more ready welcome from Christians, as being *πάντων ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιός ἐστι*, worthy of all acceptation.

IIII. A Paradox to reason; & ideo *Apostolus serià illà obstinatione utitur*, saith *Gerard*.

Secondly, In the proposition observe.

I. The person who came, *ἡγεσθὲς ἰησοῦς*, Jesus Christ, the eternal son of God.

II. The place whither, *εἰς τὸν κόσμον*, into the world, a vally of tears, a stage of misery.

III. To what end, or wherefore, he came, *σῶσαι*, to save. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved, *Joh. 3. 17*.

IV. The persons whom he came for, *ἀμαρτανῶν*, sinners; and those

not



not *Angels*, but *men*, &c. Each word heightens the mercy of Christ, and should provoke us to an effectual entertainment of that Gospel which reveales Christs *coming into the world to save sinners*.

I shall summe up these into this Doctrine,

*The Gospel (of which this is the summe, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners) is a most certain truth, and most acceptable doctrine.* Doctrine.

In prosecution of which I shall endeavour to shew,

First, That the *promised Messiah* is already come into the world.

Secondly, That *Jesus Christ*, whom we acknowledge, and profess, is that *promised Messiah*.

Thirdly, The importance of that phrase, *Christ came into the world*; what that implies.

Fourthly, That the *design* of Christs coming into the world was to *save sinners*.

Fifthly, How Christ carried on this design: or, in what respects Christ may be said to *save sinners*.

Sixthly, Why it was necessary Christ should come in order to this end, viz. *mans salvation*.

Seventhly, Upon what accounts this is and ought to be a *most acceptable doctrine*.

I shall be brief in the two first, as knowing I speak to Christians: onely suggest some things to strengthen your faith.

And first, That the *true Messiah* is come appears upon a four-fold account. I Partic.

I. Because all those cities and places, in which Christ was in order to the fulfilling of the *prophecies* in the old Testament, to be *born*, *brought up*, and *manifest* himself in, are long since *ruined*, and utterly *demolished*. He was to be born at *Beth-lehem*: But thou *Beth-lehem Ephratah*, though thou be little among the thousands of *Judah*, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in *Israel*, Mic. 5. 2. He was to dwell at *Nazareth*, to come into *Jerusalem*, Rejoyce greatly, O daughter of *Zion*; shout, O daughter of *Jerusalem*; Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, &c. Zech. 9. 9. And that while the second Temple stood, the glory of which upon this onely account was prophesied by *Haggai* to be greater then the glory of the former Temple, because of the person of the *Messiah* in it, *Haggai* 2. 7, 9. Add *Malachy*, who lived in the time the second Temple was built, and was contemporary with the Prophet *Haggai*. But now all these cities are ruined, and which is a clear evidence the *Messiah* is come, the second Temple destroyed, and *Jerusalem* demolished by the *Romanes*.

Mal. 3. 1.

II. The *ceasing* of the *Jewish* politie and commonwealth: which was not to be, till the coming of the *true Messiah*, according to *Isaiah* 44.

I. 1

Isaiah 44

Molin. Vates  
p. 289.

Idem de di-  
sciplina &  
instructione  
Judæorum.

Gram. p. 91.

cob's prophesie, Gen. 49. 10. which the Antient Jews themselves understood of the Messiah. *Per quem CHRISTI ADVENTUM non est intelligenda Christi nativitas, stetit enim respublica Judæorum, & firmam aliquam politiam habuit per annos septuaginta duos post Christum natum; sed per adventum Christi intelligimus manifestationem Christi per Evangelium; By which coming of Christ, we must not understand Christs birth, for then there was a commonwealth of the Jews, which had too some kinde of a settled politie for seventy two years after Christ was born: but we understand by the coming of Christ the manifestation of him by the Gospel: in which sence 'tis said Matth. 10. 23. ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the son of man be come. The power of life and death was taken from them in our Saviours time, as appears by their own ingenuous confession to Pilate, John 18. 31. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law; the Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawfull for us to put any man to death. Romani Judæa præfectos habebant, cgebant fidem homagii præstare Casari; numisma cudere illis licitum non fuit.*

I shall not dispute the punctual time when this Scepter departed, whether in Herod's; or when Titus destroyed the Jewish State, which I must think most probable, because then the gathering of the nations was to Christ, by the coming in of the Gentiles: but this is evident, that that Politie is now destroyed, and the Jews a scattered nation throughout the world.

III. The abrogation of the Jewish worship, and Levitical ceremonies. This was prophesied by Daniel as one thing which should be by the coming of the Messiah, *In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*, Dan. 9. 27. as wholly needless after the coming of the Messiah, whom they typified and prefigured. God never intended the Jewish worship should continue alwaies, as being a heavy yoke, and, after the coming in of the Gentiles (especially, as to the place of it) impossible, as Eusebius demonstrates in the third chapter of his first book, *De demonstratione Evangelica*. Moses himself spoke of another Prophet, Deut. 18. 15, 18. who should deliver from the bondage of sin to the heavenly Canaan; as Moses had done from Egypt's; as a Law giver to the Gentiles, when the Jewish rites should be wholly abolished; and prophesying and vision failed amongst the Jews, when this great Prophet was come into the world.

IV. The heathen Oracles are silenced, and their idolatrie destroyed, which was to be at the coming of the Messiah, according to the prophesie of Zechariah, *And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land,*  
and



and they shall no more be remembred: and also I will cause the prophets, and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land, Zech. 13. 7. and of Isaiah, And the idols he shall utterly abolish, Isa. 2. 18. and, at verse 20. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles, and to the bats. And so it happened at the coming of our Messiah, when Augustus, consulting the Oracle about his successour, received this answer, Παις Ἑβραίων κλέσαις τοῦδε θεοῦ περιπατεῖν, &c. An Hebrew childe hath bid me leave these shrines; which Oracle Augustus having received, erected an Altar in the Capitol with this inscription, Ara primogeniti Dei. Plutarch in his book, Περὶ τῶν ἐλλειπόντων χρησμεῖων, de defectu oraculorum, concerning the defect of the Oracles, confesseth the thing, though he knew not the cause.

Hottinger,  
p. 35.

—Delphis Oracula cessant,

Juvenal observed in the time of Domitian; and the rest decayed soon after.

Secondly, That our Jesus is the promised Messiah, appears,

2. Partic.

I. From the evident fulfilling of all the prophecies of the old Testament concerning the Messiah in Jesus Christ the Messiah. He was to be born of a virgin, Isa. 7. 14. Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son: so was our Jesus, Matth. 1. 23. And that too in the citie of Bethlehem, Mich. 2. 2. But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel: and so was Christ, Matth. 2. 11. brought up too in Galilee, Matth. 2. 22. and he rode in triumph into Jerusalem, Matth. 21. as it was prophesied of the Messiah, Zech. 9. 9. Rejoyce greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, &c. There is not a passage in the death of Christ, but was in answer to some prophecies of the old Testament, his side pierced, as foretold by Zechariah, They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, Zech. 12. 10. his drinking of vinegar, in Psal. 69. 21. In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink: his crucifying amongst thieves, Isa. 53. 12. He was numbred among the transgressours: his death and burial, Isa. 53. 9. He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death: yet so as not to see corruption, Psal. 16. 10. Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption: but to be raised again, as in Acts 2. 25, 26. By the harmony of which events to the prophecies, the Gentiles were convinced to leave their Idolatrie, and to embrace the Doctrine and Gospel of Jesus Christ: witness whole nations, whose conversion from a settled, inveterate Idolatrie, in a short time, without worldly power and force; no enticements of pleasure or profit; no carnal means; in the face of fire and faggot,

brought over to the acknowledgement of a crucified Messiah, must needs speak God in it, and must certainly be imputed to the care of God in fulfilling those prophecies, which he that runs may read concerning the calling and coming in of the Gentiles at the coming of the Messiah; see *Isaiah* 2. 2, 3. *Fer.* 16. 19. *Malachi* 1. 11. *Genes.* 49. 10. all which evidently speak the truth of our Messiah.

I I. From those many miracles, by which Christ confirmed his Doctrine, which, if you observe, are the very same, which the Prophet *Isaiah* foretels should be wrought by the true Messiah, *Isaiah* 35. 5, 6. In reference to the fulfilling which prophecies Christ had *John's* disciples tell him, as an argument that Christ was he which should come; that the *blinde received their sight*, &c. *Matth.* 11. 5. It was a rational conclusion which they made, *John*, 6. 14. when they had seen the miracle of the multiplied loaves, *This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world*: μέγας ἀνδρα δούλον λέγειν ἡμῶν, ὃν οἱ ῥαῖς παραδόξαν ἔργον ποιήσῃς, a teacher τ' αὐτοῦ διδασκόμενον. And far be that blasphemie from the thoughts of any of our hearts, that these were done by Magick, or the power of the devil; why did not his enemies accuse him of it? especially when it was one condition in the judges of the *Sanhedrim*, that they should be skill'd in *magick* that they might detect and Judge others for it. For certainly, then others, who envied Christ the glorie that he got by these miracles, would out of envy and emulation have learnt the same art, which yet no history makes mention of, that ever I saw, or heard of. Nor were they done by the power of the devil, for the manner of Christs miracles were casting out of devils, and *Beelzebub* could not cast out *Beelzebub*; and surely, Christ would have affected privacie and solitude, if he had intended to have imposed upon the credulitie of the ignorant, who yet chose the most conspicuous places, and the greatest multitude to work his miracles amongst, having oft thousand eyes witnesses of them. The Jews themselves can give no other account to a Pagan, why they credit the miracles of the old Testament, then the testimony of those that saw them: the rapture of *Elias*, onely upon the bare testimony of *Elisha*, 1 *King.* 2. 1. If they will not give credit to the Apostles testimonies (though no reason why an historical faith should not be given them) yet let them credit *Josephus*: which the Jews say cannot be found in their copies, and no wonder, *Nam Judaei non habent Josephum filius Malachiae, qui graves scripsit libros Antiquitatum de quo nos loquimur, sed Josephum filium Gorionis, qui aliquid simile scripsit Hebraice*, saies *Bellarmino*. And these things speak the truth of all these miracles, as he that was cured of his blindness argued

Hornbeck,  
pag. 234.

Grot. de veritat. Relig.  
pag. 222. &c.

Josephus  
Antiq. lib.  
18. c. 4.

Bellarmino de  
script. Eccles.  
p. 38.

divine testimony.



ed with the Pharisees, John 9. 30, 31, 32, 33. Why, *hence is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes: now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blinde: if the man were not of God he could do nothing.*

III. From that *general expectation*, which the Jews themselves had of their *Messiah* to come into the world at *that time*, when Christ lived: which expectations were grounded upon the prophecies of the old Testament, especially upon *Daniel* the ninth, which occasioned a general conflux of the Jews from all parts to see the event. That the Jews now expected their *Messiah*, is evident from *Luke* 19. 11. So strong was this persuasion that the *Messiah* should appear about this time, that, as *Grotius* observes, some took *Herod* to be him, whence the *Herodians*: others one *Judas*, whom they called *Bar-Cochebah*, that is, *the Son of a star*, alluding to *Numb.* 24. 17. *There shall come a star out of Jacob, &c.* some one, some another to be the *Messiah*, by which the *Jews* themselves subscribe to the truth of the *Messiah*. Though as *Vives* observes, none before Christ durst profess himself the *Messiah*, yet the expectation was so general, that the *Heathens* themselves had report of the *Jews* expectation of their *Messiah* at that time, as both *Tacitus* and *Suetonius* relate. It was *vetus & constans fama*, saies *Suetonius*: which they could not have but from the *Jews* computation, *ex antiquis Sacerdotum libris*, saith *Tacitus*. I might add further as confirmation of this *Gospel-doctrine* the *spotless holiness* of Christ the Teacher; the exactness of that holiness it requires; the repugnance of it to interests, and carnal designs (which speaks it no politick plat-form) the wonderfull propagation of it by weak instruments, and against strong oppositions, together with the glorie of that reward it promises to the obeyers of it; all which speak it to be *μετὰ ἁγίας*, a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance. But this onely as a preface to the future discourse.

Thirdly, *The importance of this phrase.*

This phrase doth not speak,

I. Any *local motion* of the *Divine nature*: for that being infinite, and so *every where*, is not capable of any *local mutation*, which is the property onely of finite natures. Christ did not leave heaven, when he came into the world: it is true, he is said, *John* 3. 13. *to come down from heaven, and to come from above*, verse 31. Which is not to be understood, as if he had brought his humane nature from heaven, as the *Valentinians*, and *Marcionists* of old abused

*Grot. p. 165.*  
*Hottung. p. 12.*

*Vives. p. 491.*

*Hornb. p. 218.*

3. *Partic.*

*Venit per quod homo erat, nam per quod Deus erat, semper huc erat. August. Tom. 10. pag. 195. de verb. Apost.*

bused these places; for that was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, Luke 1. 35. *The holy Ghost shall come upon thee, the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.* Nor yet must we understand it as by any change of place: but either because his *humane nature* was produced not by any *earthly generation*, but by a *heavenly manner*, or because of Christs willing submission, and humbling himself to take this nature upon him, and to appear in the form of a servant, as he is said to do, Phil. 2. 7.

I I. Not a *real parting* with any of his *glory*: for that being *infinite and eternal*, as he was God, was as incapable of any diminution, as of any accession: even then when he came into the world, and took upon him the form of a servant, he counted it not robbery to be equal with God, Phil. 2. 6. Indeed, <sup>ἐκείνως</sup> verse 7. he humbled himself as to his Divine nature, not absolutely considered in it self, but in respect of that voluntary *economy* and dispensation, whereby he condescended to take upon him our nature, and the form of a servant; but even then, when he was come into the flesh, the Apostle tells you, he was God over all, blessed for ever, Rom. 9. 5. *A childe born*, Isa. 9. 6. yet the mighty God, Mich. 5. 2. noting his being before born, in those words, *whose going forth have been of old, from everlasting.* But this phrase speaks five things.

1. *The pre-existence of the Divine nature: viz.* that Christ was before he came into the world. This is also hinted in other like expressions of Scripture; as, first, that Christ was manifested in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3. 16. which speaks that he had an *existence* before he came into the world. see 1 John 3. 8. *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested*, and to name no more, 1 John 4. 23. *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God, &c.* Hinc colligimus prius fuisse apud patrem, quod ostenditur coeterna ejus Divinitas, saith Calvin upon this place. The Socinians use many shifts to evade this argument for Christ's Divinitie, as that to *come in the flesh* is to appear in *infirmities, misery, and contempt*: but though *flesh* in Scripture signifies sometimes weakness; yet to *come in the flesh*, is never so used. Besides, the Apostle makes this an evidence of believers, to confess that *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*: many unbelievers saw and acknowledged that he lived without pomp, and worldly Majesty, in poverty and infirmity. See *Isaiah* 53. 2, 3. A second like expression in Scripture is, that *God and man came to save sinners*, which is from God, Mat. 16. 17.

*Object.* Yea, but *Antichrist* is said to come, 1 John 2. 18. and yet he doth not therefore exist before.

*Answer.* A lamentable shift, for Scripture must give light to Scripture

Calvin



pture; as the Lamps in the Tabernacle were to be lighted by one another, according to the Law. Our faith must be built upon the Analogy of Scripture, which in many parallel expressions speaks this truth: as *Hebrews 2. 16.* ἐπιλαμβάνεται, *He took on him*, which must necessarily include the *pre-existence* of that nature which did assume flesh: so *S. John* tells you, *That the word was made flesh, Joh. 1. 14.* and that that word was *from the beginning*, and truly God, verse 1. And nothing in this point is more clear then that saying of Christ's, *Joh. 16. 28.* *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

*Analogy  
and  
Parascel.*

**II.** *The assuming humane nature into unitie of person and subsistence with the divine, and so appearing in the world.* This Scripture abundantly testifies (though among the Socinian Doctors it be *commentum hominum superstitiosorum*) as *Heb. 2. 14.* *He was made partaker of flesh and blood*, and verse 16. *he took upon him the seed of Abraham*; and, *the word was made flesh, John 1. 14.* The humane nature not existing before assumed, but assumed in the first moment of its production by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, so that Christ took our whole nature, body and soul, with all their Faculties, Properties, Affections, nay, with all natural, though not sinfull, infirmities, that he might in all things be like his brethren, sin only excepted, *Heb. 2. 17.* without conversion or confusion of natures or properties. And in this nature thus assumed, *Venit unus sine peccato, qui salvos faceret à peccato*, saies *S. Augustine*, *One came without sin, who might save from sin.* He appeared in the world, which is the great mystery the Apostle speaks of, *1 Tim. 3. 16.* namely, *God manifested in the flesh*: and by this assuming humane nature, he was capacitated for that great design of his coming into the world, which was to save sinners, in order to which, God required a perfect obedience: therefore Christ is said to be *made under the law, Gal. 4. 4.* and *Satisfaction by a price of blood paid; for without blood is no remission, Heb. 9. 22.* Both which were by the Justice of God to be performed in the same nature, which had offended against the law, and so was liable to death through sin.

*Nil minus  
habebat in  
natura, sed ni-  
hil habebat in  
culpa; Aug.  
p. 106.  
Aug. ibid.*

**III.** *Christ obscuring the glorie of his Divinitie by a veil of flesh.* For though, as I said before, he parted with none of his glory, yet he much obscured it by our weak and miserable nature: though some rays of it broke out sometimes in his discourses, and, especially, in his miracles, which oft caused the beholders to acknowledge him the *Son of God*; yet he seemed for a time to have laid aside his Majestic, and Glorie, while he appeared in the world with-

out

out form or comeliness. Therefore, when he was ready to leave the world, see how he praises to his Father for a manifestation of that glory, which here was obscured in the world, *John 17. 5.* And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was: where he praises not for any addition, or accession of further glory, but a discovery of the glory of his Divine nature through that humane nature, which he had assumed to himself.

I V. In taking upon himself a state of lowest abasement and humiliation. He took upon him the form of a servant, *Phil. 2. 7.* and *ἐκείνωσας, quasi ex omni seipsum in nihil reduxit*, saith Beza: and he became poor for our sakes, *2 Cor. 8. 9.* *Hic erat per divinam majestatem, venit per humanam infirmitatem*, saies Augustine. He affected not earthly greatness and pomp, but declined it: and his life, from the Cradle to the Cross, was but one continued scene of misery.

V. Christ's willing and ready undertaking for sinners. Coming is a voluntary motion; Christ came into the world, freely, and willingly to undertake the work of saving sinners. *Assumpsit animam & carnem hominis, non antea à se promerentis, nec ad illam percipiendam sublimitatem virtute propria laborantis, sed omnino gratia*, saies Augustine. He was not merited, or pre-engaged, but out of his love he gave himself, as the Apostle, *Gal. 2. 20.* *I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* He was not forced to it, but came freely, *John 10. 18.* *No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of my self: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again, &c.* Indeed, he is oft said to be sent of his Father, *John 3. 17.* *God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world:* and *Gal. 4. 14.* *When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman;* but it was by a voluntary consent in Christ to the counsel and design of God, decreeing Christ to the office of a Mediatour: therefore, *Acts 2. 23.* it is said by Peter to the scoffing Jews, *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel, and fore knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain him.* Christ is said likewise to be sealed by the Father, *John 6. 27.* *Him hath God the Father sealed:* and to be sanctified and sent into the world by the Father, *John 10. 36.* but it was by the consent and condescension of Christ, offering himself as a Sponsor, and Mediatour, and submitting himself to the will of his Father, *Heb. 10. 5, 7.* Christ did voluntarily undertake for us, and his submission to the Father was not an act of the Divine nature, but voluntarily of the second person, willingly offering himself to his Fathers justice, for the reco-

very



very of sinners: and therefore Christ is said oft to give himself, and that out of mere love, *Ephes. 5. 2, 25.* This expression of *coming into the world* doth not onely speak the event and issue, but the design, will, and ultimate end of Christ's coming: *quod non gravatum salvat*, saith *Musculus*, that he did it freely and willingly.

*Application.*

First, This speaks *infinite love*; that God should send Christ, and Christ come to undertake for sinners. God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, *Rom. 5. 8.* and, God so loved the world, that he gave his onely begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life, *John 3. 16.* Each word there heightens the love of God, a Son given, a begotten Son, an onely begotten Son, nay, a well-beloved Son, as in *Matth. 3. 17.* who was in the bosome of his Father, *John 1. 18.* that God should not spare his Son, *Rom. 8. 32.* this must needs speak love.

It was an argument of *Abraham's* love to God, that at his command he withheld not his *Isaac* (*Gen. 22. 2.*) from God, who yet gave him, and had power to command him again. But that God should give his Son to the wicked, ungratefull, undeserving world, must needs speak a greater affection then that of *Abraham's* and what can that be les then an *infinite love*? When Christ did but shed a tear for *Lazarus*, the Jews collected his love from that: *John 11. 35, 36.* how much more may we, that Christ should come into the world to shed his blood for us? This indeed is *infinite love*, &c.

Secondly, This speaks *abundance of comfort* to Christians. Is Christ come into the world? hath he taken upon him our nature? then this speaks comfort to true sincere Christians.

I. In case of their *imperfect obedience*; in case of their many failings and imperfections. Why, Christian, do but maintain sinceritie, and press on to perfection, and remember that Christ hath assumed thy nature, and in that perfectly fulfilled the Law, and that obedience is made thine through believing, and thou so accounted as righteous in the sight of God; which the Apostle suggests as matter of comfort to Christians, *Rom. 8. 3, 4.* For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinfull flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Christ in thy nature perfectly fulfilled the law, and that for thee.

II. In case of outward affliction for Christ. Christ hath taken

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bello Jud.

thy nature, and so is sensible of, and sympathizeth with thy afflictions. This was one end of Christ's coming into the world in our nature, subject to many miseries; *Heb. 4. 15. We have not an high-priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin:* and this must needs be matter of comfort. *Josephus* tells us how that a part of *Rome* being set on fire by the Jews, in which many of the *Romanes* perished, that this was their comfort, *in βλέπειν τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ λυγρὸν ὀδυνημένον*, to see *Cesar*, for whom they ventred their lives, weep, as affected with their misery; surely, it must be much more solid comfort for Christians suffering for Christ, to think that He suffers with them. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me:* saies the voice from heaven to him, *Acts 9. 4.* and at *verse 5.* when he said, *Who art thou Lord?* it was answered, *I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest:* yet was his persecution onely against the persons of the Christians.

III. Against fear of death. Art thou afraid to die? remember Christ hath come into the world, and hath in thy nature *tasted death*, to deliver thee from the fear of it; See *Heb. 2. 14, 15.* The tree cast into the waters sweetned them; the consideration of the Cross and Death of Christ will sweeten death to a true Christian.

Thirdly, This may instruct you in five great duties: or teach you,

I. A lesson of humilitie. Christ came into the world in a mean, low condition; in the form of a servant: the Apostle makes this use of it, *viz. to teach us humilitie*, *Phil. 2. 5, 6. Let this minde be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, &c. Christ emptied himself,* *verse 7.* exhaust is *Tertullian's* word by which he translates it: and art thou full, and bigg with pride? Christ himself would have you learn this lesson from him, *Matth. 11. 29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.*

II. Contempt of the world, and disaffection to outward pomp and greatness. Remember thy Saviour came into the world, and had not where to lay his head; and when they would have made him king, he withdrew himself as scorning it, *John 6. 15.* He was made poor for thee: this should teach thee to undervalue the world, especially, if Christ calls for it; thou mayst know the world is little worth, thy Saviour so undervalued it. Thou shouldest with Saint Paul count all things loss for the excellency of Christ, *Philip. 3. 8.*

III. Chear-



III. Chearfulness in our obedience to Christ. He came into the world chearfully, and readily to undertake for thee. It was his *meat and drink to do the will of his Father, viz.* in order to salvation: and how powerfully ought this to provoke Christians to a chearfull observance of Christ? He came into the world to die for thee; and therefore thou shouldest in an ingenuous return of thankfulness live to him; the Apostle judged this a rational inference, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. *For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves; but unto him, who died for them, and rose again.* His coming into the world to die for sinners offered a holy violence to S. Paul. Yea, this was the very end of Christ's undertaking, and giving himself for us, Titus 2. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquitie, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works: zealous, or ready and chearfull.* Christ's love prompted him to a willing undertaking for us: and how should it provoke us to a chearfull obedience unto him? Luke 1. 74, 75. *That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.*

IV. Endeavours and desires to partake of the grace of Christ. Christ is come into the world, hath taken our nature, and this to that end, that we might partake of his grace: he came into the world as the Son of man, that by him, we might be made the sons of God.

V. And lastly, Hatred and detestation of sin. This was it, which brought Christ from the bosome of his Father, which pierced his sides, and wounded his heart, that, in the anguish of it, he cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* indeed, as to the event, we may cry out with him, *Felix culpa*, it was an happy guilt, which brought us such a Saviour; but in the mean time let us eye our sins, through the Wounds and Bloud of Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, and mourn. *I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his onely son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born, Zech. 12. 10.* Thy sins brought Christ into the world, and that leads me to

The fourth particular, viz:

*That Christ's design of coming into the world was to save sinners.* 4. Partic.

*Alensis* and *Scotus* are of opinion, that though man had never sinned, yet Christ should have come into the world, for the greater perfection of the world, and communication of divine goodness, (though in *natura impassibili*, which is a groundless rash conjecture) or else for the confirmation of men and Angels in their state of righteousness and happiness. That Angels are confirmed by Christ, I think may safely and piously be asserted (whence he is said to reconcile all things, whether in heaven, or in earth, *Coloss. 1. 20.*) though \*others think it was from God, as a rewarder of their continued obedience. But, that Christ should have come into the world, if man had not sinned, Scripture gives us no ground to believe; nay, both it and right reason do evidently evince the contrary: as,

I. *There would have been no necessity of his coming.* *Valentia* thinks Christ had not come for venial sins onely; that assertion being built upon a false ground, viz. that any sin is in its own nature and demerit venial, which is contrary to *Rom. 6. 23.* The wages of sin is death. But, that's certain, had there been no sin, there had been no need of Christ, for *Tolle morbos, tolle vulnera, & nulla est medicina causa*, saith *Austin*. What need of a Physician, where there is no disease? therefore I observe that each Scripture-expression, whereby Christ is set out to us, speaks a reference unto this. He is called a Saviour, *Tit. 1. 3, 4.* and what need of a Saviour, where there is no sin? He is called a Mediatour, *1 Tim. 2. 5.* that had bin needles had God and man continued friends: a Physician, *Isa. 61. 1.* that speaks a reference to a disease: a ransom, *1 Tim. 2. 6.* that too had been needles had we not been in bondage to sin and satan: a surety, *Hebr. 7. 22.* and that needles too had there been no debt contracted, no obligation to divine justice: a fountain, *Zech. 13. 1.* no use of that, if man had not been defiled by sin: a reconciler, *Col. 1. 21.* what need of that had not man been estranged, and at enmity to God? a shepherd, usefull when sheep are strayed, *1 Pet. 2. 25.* 'Tis the reason of his name *Iesus*, *Matth. 1. 21.* Thou shalt call his name *Iesus*; for he shall save his people from their sins.

II. Scripture every where asserts the salvation of sinners, as the great end of Christs coming into the world: as *Luke 9. 10.* The Son of man is come to seek, and to save that which was lost. Had not the sheep gone astray, the goat been lost, the son a prodigal, they had never been sought for, *Luke 18.* So *Matth. 20. 28.* The son of man came not to be ministred unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many; that is, for the purchase of their salvation: and again, *Iohn 10. 18.* I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly: and Christ saith, he came to call sinners to repentance, *Matth. 9. 13.* Now it is a known rule, *sublato fine, tolluntur media*

\* Burges's p.  
133. Of the  
Covenant.

Aug. serm. 9.  
de verbis  
Dom. p. 198.



*media ad finem*: if you suppose not the ordination of the means to the end, you make them wholly useles, for the necessitie of them is relative to the end: and therefore supposing man not to have sinned, we cannot rationally imagine Christ should have come into the world, the Scripture laying down this as the principal end of his coming.

Two cautions here must be observed;

1. This was his principal end, not in opposition to the advancing of Gods glory; which was the ultimate end of all Christs undertakings. The salvation of sinners was but subordinate to this, see *Ioh. 17. 4.* and the glory both of justice and mercy was magnified in this: for at the first coming of Christ was proclaimed glory to God on high, *Luk. 2.*

2. Not in opposition to the other subordinate ends: as setting Christians an example, revealing the way of life and salvation: all which were in order to this design, as shall appear presently.

III. Each undertaking of Christ had an influence upon, and ordination to this end: his birth, as the Angels said to the shepherds, *Luke 2. 11.* his death, that was the price of our salvation, *1 Pet. 1. 19.* he came on purpose to take away sin, *1 Joh. 3. 5.* to destroy the works of Satan, *v. 8.* to set us an exact example of pietie, to reveal to us the way of salvation, to perform all those actions to which he was anointed, and designed, *Isa. 61. 1.* and all these in order to the promoting this great end of his coming, the salvation of sinners. Now that to which a man orders and levels all his actions, we conclude to be his principal end; so here, &c. The prayers he put up, *Ioh. 17.* the sorrows he suffered, the shedding his tears in the garden, his blood upon the cross, was all to this end; his conflicts with the storms of the world, the frowns and anger of his Father, were all in order to this end.

IV. Scripture highly extolls and magnifies the love of God, in sending Christ, upon this very account, that he came to save sinners: as in *Rom. 5. 8.* The love of God would have been less admirable in sending his Son, if he should have taken our nature, though we had never sinned. Observe, I pray, with what account the Apostle advanceth the love of God, *1 Joh. 4. 10.* Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins: not for the greater perfection of the world, which is Scotus his account. The Scripture is wholly silent as to any such reason of Christs coming, but as a propitiation for sin.

V. This was the most suitable means to such an end. Christs coming into the world, as I have formerly opened it, is a most proportionable means for saving sinners: for man by sin having endeavoured to lift himself above the condition of his creation, could by no means

*estus, lib. 3.  
pag. 2.*

be more suitably restored, then by Christs humiliation, and taking upon him the form of a servant. Man at first affected to be like God, *eritis sicut dii*, and God now to save him condescends to appear in the likeness of sinfull flesh, Phil. 2. 7. and he humbled himself to the death of the cross, &c.

VI. Consider Christ did not come into the world by assuming our nature for the dignity of it: (for then he might have assumed the angelical nature, when on the contrary the Apostle tells us, he took not on him the nature of Angels, Hebr. 2. 16.) but *propter indigentiam*, because of our want and indigencie, that we had been utterly undone without him: and therefore the Angels themselves, when they proclaimed the birth of Christ to the shepherds, proclaimed this at the end of it, Luke 2. 11, 14. *Good will towards men*. Therefore had not man been in this indigent, helpless, hopeless condition, Christ had not come into the world: *Si homo non periisset, filius hominis non venisset: perierat homo, venit Deus homo, & inventus est homo*.

VII. And lastly this doth most heighten that mystrie of Christs incarnation, or coming into the world; & serves most to enflame Christians hearts with pious affection to, and holy admiration of the love of Christ in coming into the world: the first, because this had not been, unless upon the most cogent, weightie reasons, as the undoing and ruine of one of Gods noblest creatures, and the offense and dishonour of an infinite God; and the latter, that Christ should come and condescend to take our nature, and a state of humiliation for our salvation, which no other motive could have provoked him to. What thankfull admiration should it create in our hearts, and we say with Mary, Luke 1. 46, 47. *My soul doth magnifie the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: that he should thus come into the world to save sinners, of whom we are chief?*

Partic. 5. Fifthly, How Christ carried on this design: or, in what respects be said to save sinners?

I. Not barely by giving himself an example, and pattern for a Christians imitation. It is true that *Christum imitari salutis via est*, which Socinus make his ground for this assertion, *to imitate Christ is the way to salvation*. It lies upon Christians as a duty to walk as he walked, 1 John 2. 6. *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked*. And it is one end of Christs death, to set us a copy of patience and submission, 1. Pet 2. 21. *Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps*. And it is as true that, whoever expects upon good grounds Christ for his purchase must take him as his pattern and example; but through the rebellion of the flesh and the temptation of Satan it comes to pass that

Bonavent. in  
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August. Tom.  
10. p. 195.



that the best of us can but imperfectly imitate him, and so still stand in need of a Saviour, to satisfie for the imperfections of our obedience, through whom it must be accepted. Besides, in this sense the Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs may be called Saviours, as setting us an example of piety and patience: and so the Apostle bids us to account of them Jam. 5. 10. *Take, my brethren, the Prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.* And therefore we must rise higher then this, in conceiving Christ to save sinners: therefore the Apostle, where he propounds the death of Christ as an example of patience, suggests it also as an expiation for sin, and purchase of our pardon, as 1 Pet. 2. where exhorting to patient suffering for well-doing after the example of Christ, ver. 21. *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps;* he adds at ver. 24. *who his own self bare our sins in his own bodie on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live to righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.* And it is the issue of Christs undertakings, his death and purchase, that we are redeemed from sin, and freed to walk in imitation of Christ in righteousness and holiness: then which Scripture speaks nothing more plainly, as is clear from Gal. 1. 4. *Who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world:* and 1 Pet. 1. 18. *Forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, &c.* and so Titus 1. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

II. Not as Christ is an instrument to convey salvation to sinners: which is another account Socinus gives why Christ may be said to save sinners. It is true indeed, that Christ doth bestow and confer eternal salvation upon sinners; yea, but not instrumentally, and principally, but in joynt efficiency with his Father, who, as one in being, so in working, as in John 10. 28, 30. therefore he is called *aitias oimelias*, the Author of eternal salvation. Hebr. 5. 9. and *apxwos tns zwns* Acts 3. 15. the Prince of life.

III. Not onely because he revealed the way of salvation to sinners: though this be true, yet it is too short and insufficient: for thus the Prophets, Apostles, and Ministers of the Gospel may be said to save sinners; as laying before them the way, and opening to them the Gospel of salvation. So the Apostle of himself, 1 Cor. 9. 22. *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some:* and Acts 16. 17. it is the confession of the Damocel possessed with the spirit of divination, *These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation;* & he exhorts Timothy to

to preach, as that he may save them that hear him, 1 Tim. 4. 16. If Christ be only in this respect a Saviour, then after he had by his Doctrine revealed the way to salvation, his death was altogether needless; upon which yet Scripture laies the great stress of saving sinners: *He is the Saviour of the bodie*, saith the Apostle, *Ephes. 5. 23.* he tells you how, *verse 25.* he gave himself for it, and expressly, *Tit. 2. 13, 14. Who gave himself for us, &c.*

**I V.** *Not only by confirming this doctrine revealed.* It is true, this was one end of Christ's coming, so saies our Saviour himself to Pilate, demanding of him, *Art thou a king?* John 18. 37. *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.* But, who can imagine that God should give up his onely begotten wel-beloved Son, expose him to the scorns of men, frowns of God, and at last to a cursed ignominious death, onely for confirmation of Gospel-doctrine, which was sufficiently done by the innocencie of his life, and his miracles: for it is said of the Apostles, *Mark 16. 20. That they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.* The Martyrs and Apostles might as well upon this account be called Saviours, who sealed to the truth of the Gospel with their blood; as S. Paul saith of himself, *Acts 20. 23, 24. The holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, That bonds and afflictions abide me: But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my self, &c. to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.* Christ is therefore said to save sinners by way of a real price paid, and purchase made: this Scripture speaks expressly, *Mat. 20. 28.* where it is said, *The Son of man came to give his life;* *λυτρον αἰσι πολλοῖν, a ransom for many,* which word *λυτρον* properly signifies to *redeem by way of purchase*, as those other words, *ἀπολυτρώσις, ἀνταποδοσία*, so frequently used in Scripture, as to Christ giving himself for sinners, *1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. Coloss. 1. 14.* So that Christ did truly pay to God a price for the Salvation and recovery of sinners, *Ephes. 5. 2.* The effects of which, in reference to this end of saving sinners, were

**I.** *A perfect satisfaction to Divine justice*, which required the punishment for sin, either in the person offending, or in his surety: hence *persons*, and *debts*, and such like expressions in Scripture, *an oblation, a ransom, a propitiation for sin*, *1 John 2. 1.* hence those expressions, *Isaiah 53. 5. The chastisement of our peace was upon him: and verse 6. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all: it pleased the Lord to bruise him, v. 10. and, He made his soul an offering for sin;* and this satisfaction, by reason of the dignitie and holiness of the person, was exactly proportionable to whatever the justice

of



of God could require for mans sin. *Acts 20. 28.* he is said to have purchased the Church with his own blood. Sin bound us over to justice; Christ satisfied it; and so saves sinners: and supposing God's acceptance of a suretie (which was an act of his highest grace and favour, and wholly subject to the liberty of his Will) his Justice could not require a more perfect satisfaction then was made by Christ.

2. *Pacifying of the wrath of God towards, and reconciling God to sinners.* Indeed by the Socinian divinitie, God and man were never at odds. *Christus non placavit Deum, sed placatum ostendit, faith Socinus.* It is true indeed, that the very coming of Christ into the world was an evidence and demonstration of that great love of benevolence, or that Philanthropie whereby God was inclined to do good to lost man, *John 3. 16.* but no love of complacencie or delight in a sinner, till actually reconciled by Jesus Christ; but a mutual enmitie between God and man, and a hatred in God to man. *Eph. 2. children of wrath,* and, *John 3. verse last, upon him who believeth not, the wrath of God,* which anger and wrath of God stands in contradistinction and opposition, not to the general love of God to his creatures, as such, whereby he may design to do them good, but to the the special love and friendship of God to, and delight in his creature; which cannot be till justice be satisfied, and reconciliation perfected by Christ, *2 Cor. 5. 19. Rom. 3. 25.* that is, his Justice in punishing sin: and, *Ephes. 2. 15, 16.* *τὸ δὲ τὸ ἐχθρὰν δεινύοντι τὸ καὶ ἀγαπᾶσαι, τὸ δὲ τὸ πῶς ποῦν τὸ εἰρηνοποιῆσαι,* faith *Chrysostom,* reconciliation supposeth enmitie, and making peace includes opposition; till which be removed, the Holiness, and Justice of God permits not the salvation of any sinner.

3. *Pardon and justification from guilt,* *Rom. 3. 24.* we are said to be justified freely by his grace: freely in respect of us who confer nothing to it; by grace, in respect of Divine acceptance of this price paid by Christ, yet by justice and merit, if we respect Christ, who came into the world to die, and by death to purchase our pardon, *Rom. 5. 9.*

So then, Justice being satisfied, God reconciled, and guilt removed by the undertaking of Christ, the design of saving sinners, for which he came into the world, is effectually promoted.

Sixthly, *Why, and how it was necessary that Christ should come in order to this end, viz. man's salvation.*

I shall lay down these six positions for the determination of this

I. It is absolutely impossible that the sinner should be saved, till sin

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by

by some means be removed, and taken away. As it is contrary to God's revealed will to save any man in his sin, without repentance and faith in Christ; so it is a contradiction to the holiness and purity of his nature, as being a God of purer eyes than to behold evil, as it is *Hab. 1. 13.* I like not to dispute the absoluteness of God's power; but we must have a care of exalting God's power to the prejudice of his Holiness: as soon may God leave to hate sin (that is, as soon may God lay aside his nature) as save any man obstinately continuing and dying in his sin.

I I. It was not absolutely necessary for Christ to come into the world to save sinners. Not by any necessity of coercion, for he undertook this work willingly; hence it is said, *Isaiah 53. 12. He poured out his soul unto death, &c.* to note the willingness of Christ in the work. Besides, it could not be absolutely necessary, because God might, without any prejudice to his Justice, have suffered man finally to have perished in his apostasie: nor was he any way more obliged, then by his love and mercie, to provide for the recoverie of lost man, more then the *Apostate Angels*; therefore Scripture evidenceth the love of Christ by this, *Ephes. 5. 2.* and *Hebr. 2. 16.*

I I I. Supposing God's design of saving sinners, This was the most convenient way. This I finde readily assented to by all, that it was most convenient every way: both

1. In respect of God, that the dishonour, which he had received by sin, might be repaired by the undertakings of a person of infinite dignitie, as Christ was.

2. That sinners might be saved with securitie to all Divine attributes, by satisfaction to his Justice, by Christ's sufferings in the same nature, which had offended.

3. For securty to his Holy Law, by Christ's unfinning obedience; and

4. With the highest exaltation of his Mercy; for *abundantioris erat misericordiae, quam si peccata absque satisfactione dimisisset*, saith *Aquinas*. The Apostle from hence magnifies the riches of God's mercy, *Ephes. 2. 4, 5.* Hereby God did also most remarkably communicate himself to the creature; a greater was not possible then a personal union to the humane nature. And then

5. Most convenient in respect of us, as being the most cogent incentive of love to God: *Ferrea & lapidea corda esse oportet, quae non emolliet tam incomparabilis amoris divini suavitatis*, saith *Calvin*. Hereby we have the advantage of an exact copie of all vertue, humilitie, patience, constancie, justice, and the like, and the most prevailing

*Aq. 3. p. 4. 46.  
art. 10.*

*Calv. in Joan.  
15. 13.*



vailing motive to imitate it in all holiness and piety, 1 Cor. 6.v. last. And then,

Lastly, It was most eminent in respect of Satan; that he might be more shamed and confounded, by being conquered in the nature, which he had seduced and ruined.

I V. Supposing the decree of God, and his revelation concerning mankinde; *Man's recovery and salvation was as impossible any other way, then by Christ's coming into the world, as it is for God's purpose to be frustrated, or his will to be fallible, or plainly for God to lye.* To which purpose these Scriptures speak expressly, *Acts 4. 12. Acts 2. 23. Luke 22. 22. Luke 24. 26, 27.*

V. Supposing God's purpose of saving sinners by way of a price and satisfaction, *Christ's coming into the world was indispensably necessarie.* And in this *Eftius*, though he thinks it possible, that mankinde might have been recovered, and reconciled to God by a mere man, or an Angel, yet this would not have been a redemption by an adequate price or purchase, because Justice required satisfaction in the nature offending, every individual of which being corrupted, and so obnoxious to Justice, and indebted to God in more then it was able to pay (as deriving all from him) was incapable of satisfying for its own score, much less for the sin of all mankinde: but supposing a man created pure, or an Angel, still the obedience of this creature would be but finite, and so in the rigor of Justice unproportionable to expiate an offence against an infinite Majestie, or to repair that dishonour and injurie which sin doth to God; and then, the more the creature is enabled to do, the more it is indebted, therefore cannot merit, or satisfy for former sin, *Psal. 49. 7. None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.*

VI. And lastly, *It is hard to conceive and imagine such a power so absolute in God, as by which (supposing sin and the creature fallen from him) he should restore and save it, without the undertakings of Christ.* I confesse I approve not the rash curious searchings into the depth of God's power, as esteeming it more the dutie of Christians, thankfully and piously to admire God's revelation of mans recovery by Christ, then nicely to enquire of the \*possibility of another way of salvation. *Calvin* saith, God could have done it *solo nutu & verbo*, as he created all things at first by a word; which I cannot close with, for surely God would never have given up his Son to such miseries and sorrows, might sinners have been saved by a word speaking: this detracts from the glory of Christ's undertakings for sinners. *Eftius* thinks that *minima passio Christi sufficere potuisset pro justo pretio redemptionis mundi*: by reason of the digni-

\*Vbi semel ostenditur Deus quid fieri velit, stulta est ac noxia de possibilitate disputatio. *Calv. in Job. 16. 7.*

tie of the person; but neither can this be without the falling of God's truth to the ground, the truth I mean of this threatening, *Gen. 2. 17. Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; thou shalt not eat: for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die:* which must be made good either in the persons sinning, and so man had bin irrecoverably lost; or in Christ, as their surety, and therefore death on him was indispensably required by this threatening: therefore, this special way by the death of Christ was necessary, though not absolutely, as I shewed before, yet *ex suppositione finis*, supposing God's purpose of saving sinners after the threatening revealed.

To make out this, consider three things.

I. *The indispensableness of God's justice, requiring the punishment of, and satisfaction for sin.* A truth, which every man carries a demonstration of in his own breast, even those who were wholly strangers to God's revealed will of punishing sinners: the *Heathens* I mean, who had inward fears of an avenging justice for sin. And, if we assert justice to be an attribute essential to God, we must assert, I think, that God punishes sin out of nature, not will onely, (though all the circumstances of punishment be subjected in the freedom of God's will) otherwise, we must suppose it possible for God not to hate sin; and so sin, or no sin, would be all one to God: now the Scripture founds God's hatred to sin in his nature, *Heb. 1. 13.* if then the justice of God be indispensable, then satisfaction must be made before the sinner can be saved.

Aq. 3. p. 4. 1.  
art. 2.

II. *The impossibilitie of satisfaction to justice any other way then by the undertaking of Christ.* For no mere creature could lay down a price satisfactorie for the salvation of lost man, though *Aquinas* thinks, that the obedience of the creature might have been available to the salvation of sinners, yet confesseth that this would have been *Satisfactio sufficiens imperfectè secundum acceptionem Dei, non perfectè per adequationem ad compensationem culpa commissæ*: onely satisfaction improperly to divine acceptance, not properly by a proportionable compensation for an offence against an infinite God: but of this formerly.

III. *Christ did by his undertakings fully and perfectly satisfie Gods justice, in order to the salvation of sinners:* hereby fully repairing the dishonour God sustained by sin, by an obedience more satisfactory to God, then sin was displeasing; his undertakings were the actions of an infinite person, and so proportionable to satisfie for that infinite evil that is in sin, and it was in it self compleat, not depending in its worth upon divine acceptance to supply any defect in it: but supposing Gods acceptance of that satisfaction from a surety which



which he might have required in our persons (which is of infinite love and grace) he could not refuse this, or require a more full price, and perfect satisfaction; *Hebr. 10. 14.* To summe up this, Gods justice required satisfaction; the creature could not give it; Christ as God-man made it, and onely could do it; therefore supposing the design of God to save sinners, Christs coming into the world to undertake and die for sinners was *necessarie*.

Seventhly, *Upon what accounts this is an acceptable doctrine.*

I. The expression in the Text speaks it so, *πιστός λόγος*, an expression never used by the Apostle, but in matters of the highest concernment and importance; as,

7 Partic.

1. In the *advancement of godliness and piety*; so it is used *1 Tim. 4. 8, 9.* *πιστός ὁ λόγος* ὃς ἐκ παλαιῆς ἀποδοχῆς ἔστι; and so indeed it is, as being indispensably necessary to a Christians present and future happiness, as having the *promise of this life, &c.*

2. In *asserting justification by free-grace*: so *Tit. 3. 7, 8.* *πιστός ὁ λόγος*, a doctrine sure most acceptable to any, who have either a *sense of sin*, or *apprehensions of mercy*. How acceptable must it needs be to an humbled sinner, lost in himself, to see *free-grace* coming in for his relief and succour?

3. In *encouraging Christians to suffer with Christ*: as *2 Tim. 2. 10, 11, 12.* *πιστός ὁ λόγος*, *It is a faithfull saying.* It is true, *afflictions* in themselves are not *acceptable*; but considering who ever suffers with and for Christ; and how the *cross* ushers in the *crown*, how if we *suffer with him*, we shall also *reign with him*, as the Apostle saith: it must needs be *πιστός λόγος*, &c.

II. The *nature of the thing* speaks it *acceptable*; take it under these six plain notions.

1. As a *revelation of pardon and mercy to guilty condemned malefactours*. How acceptable is the news of *pardon* to a *sentenced* person, expecting *daily execution*? such is the Gospel revealing Christs coming into the world to *save sinners*. We are all in our natural condition *guiltie*, *liable*, and *sentenced to death*; *John 3. 8.* *He that believeth not is condemned already.* When the soul comes to be humbled for sin, and lyes under sad fears, and expectation of the execution of this sentence; O! how acceptable must the revelation of *pardon* needs be, through the undertaking of Christ for sinners? such *free pardon*, as *Isa. 43. 25.* nothing in reference to us though in reference to Christs blood shed, when he came, &c. *Eph. 1. 7.*

2. As a *proclamation of peace to enemies*. How acceptable is an *Embassie of peace* from a *prince* to his *subjects*, who are in *rebellion*? We were up in *Armes*, in *open hostilitie* against God, and by

our first apostasie had cast of our obedience, and broken our *allegiance*; now God by the Gospel proclaims *peace* to such rebels through Christ pacifying his Fathers wrath, and undertaking for mans offence, 2 Cor. 5. 19. Christ purchased our peace by his blood, Coloss. 1. 20, 22. Christ offer'd himself a *hostage*, a *surety*, nay a *sacrifice* to procure our peace, and in the *fulness of time* came himself into the world to proclaim this *peace*, Eph. 2. 17. viz. to the Jews in his *person*, to the Gentiles by the Apostles his *messengers*: thus Christ spoke in S. Paul, and by him proclaimed this peace, 2 Cor. 13. 3. and still sends his Ministers his *heraulds*, and *Embassadours* to solícite your reconciliation to God, that you would lay aside the enmity of your hearts against God, and to proclaim God reconciled to you. *He hath committed to us the word of reconciliation*, read this fully, 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19, 20. The first Proclamation of Christs coming into the world by those heavenly heraulds was *peace on earth*; Luk. 2. 14. and surely *dulce nomen pacis*, as being a complex of all good desirable.

3. As a *proclamation of liberty to captives, and bond-men*. Imagine how acceptable would a *release* be to a Turkish-gallie-slave; or how gratefull the release from the *bondage of Egypt* to the Israelites bound for *Canaan*: so, and much more surely, must the revelation of liberty and freedom procured by Christ be to souls enslaved to *sin*, and led captive by *Satan at his will*, as the Apostle speaks 2 Tim. 2. 26. With what *ectasie of joy* were the Jews returning from *Babylon* surprized, that they doubted whether the thing were true or not? Psal. 126. 1, 2. This return and deliverance figured out our *redemption* and freedom by Christ, as appears from Rom. 9. 27. taken from Isa. 10. 21, 22. So, sure, to those who know what it is to be in bondage to sin, and slavery to Satan, to those who do not love their *chaines* (as truth is we all naturally do) the revelation of that freedom, wherewith Christ hath set us free, must needs be most welcome. Our natural estate is an estate of *slavery*, John 8. 34. *Whosoever commiteth sin is the servant of sin*, the Gospel reveales libertie through Jesus Christ, v. 36. and how acceptable is this? The *chief captain* priz'd his liberty, because he purchased it with a *great summe of money*, Acts 22. 28. how much more valuable and acceptable is that Gospel which reveales this libertie, bought at no less expence then the *blood of Christ* (1 Pet. 1. 18.) from *sin* and *Satan* to whom you were enslaved. We conclude them mad-men, that do not prize liberty, and surely they are not in their wits, who account not this a *faishfull saying* and *acceptable*, that *Christ is come into the world to save sinners*.

4. As a *discovery of treasures and riches to poor and beggerly persons*.

How



How acceptable is the finding of a pearl of price to a poor man: and so Christ must needs be to sinners, who are naturally poor, and miserable, and naked, as the Church of Laodicea is described, *Revel. 3. 17.* And so Christ would be indeed, were it not for the pride and blindness of mens hearts, that we are apt to say as they did, that we are rich and encreased in goods, and stand in need of nothing; and that's the reason Christ is no more acceptable to sinners. There are treasures hid in Jesus Christ; *Coloss. 2. 3.* and he came into the world that we might partake of those riches, (*2 Cor. 8. 9.*) and be rich with those durable riches of grace and glory, which are in the hands of wisdom, *Prov. 8. 18.* Christ is that pearl in the field of the Gospel, which (*Christians*) will enrich us, though we part with all to purchase it.

Matth. 13.  
46.

5. As an offer of cure to diseased persons. That's our condition out of Christ, as I have largely shewd before, now the Gospel reveals healing by Jesus Christ, *Hos. 14. 4. I will heal their back-sliding.* Christ came into the world to be both our Physician, and physick: *de pulvere creatus de pulvere sanatus; carne creaverat, carne sanatus.* saies *S. Austin.*

6. As the marrow, summe, and center of the Gospel. What the Patriarchs desired (*Joh. 8. 56.*) the Prophets foretold, the types prefigured, the Apostles preached, the promises contain, the Sacraments seal, the covenant of grace assures, whatever concerns a Christians comfort or happiness is epitomized and summd up in this, that Christ came to save sinners: and therefore it is worthe of all acceptation.

#### Application.

First, To the ministers. Let them then preach this acceptable doctrine, and lay open this truth, the great design of God in saving sinners by Jesus Christ. Christ is the summe of the Gospel, and so should be of our preaching. Observe the Apostles practise, *1 Cor. 1. 23.* preaching Christ in opposition to their carnal wisdom, which the Greekes affected, ver. 22. and though it be a stumbling-block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness, ver. 29. Thus Paul preached Christ at Athens, though the Philosophers there accounted him but a babler for it, and a setter forth of strange gods, *Acts 17. 18.* Thus Philip to the Eunuch took occasion from the Prophet to preach Christ unto him, *Acts 8. 25.* So should the Ministers of Christ take all occasions to preach Christ; they are his Embassadors to negotiate for him in the world, they have both their gifts, and commission from him, *Eph. 4. 8, 11.* and therefore should act for him and preach his interest up: *S. Paul* tells you why he was commissioned to be a Minister

Minister

Minister of the Gospel, for this very end to *preach Christ*, Ephes. 3. 7, 8. Brethren, we are Gods Trustees (as I may say) to whom he hath committed the Gospel, as 'tis 1 Tim. 1. 11. We are false to our trust, if we don't preach Christ, who is the *summe and substance* of the Gospel. Austin laid this to the charge of Tullies workes, for which he rejected them, that he did not find the name of Christ in them, and may not many dislike our Sermons, as hearing no more of Christ in them.

Rom. 10. 15.

Secondly, Then, how acceptable should the ministry of the Gospel be to you? How beautifull even the feet of those who bring you these glad tidings? What provision is made for the entertainment of Embassadors, who come to a Nation on terms of peace? so should the embassadours of Christ be acceptably entertained, as commissioned from Christ, to offer rebellious sinners terms of peace, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God, Psal. 68. 8. The Apostle tells us those are ministerial gifts, Eph. 4. 11. It is the Apostles exhortation, 1 Thess. 5. 12. We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you; what's that? their work is to discover and offer Christ to you. Surely, the dove was very welcome into the Ark, when she brought an olive branch in her mouth, the Embleme of peace: so acceptable should the ministry of the Word be, which reveals Christ as your peace, &c.

Thirdly, Examine whether you be of the number of those sinners Christ came to save. You will say, that's needless, Did not Christ come to save all? Is it not said expressly, Christ died for all? 2 Cor. 5. 15. and that he tasted death for every man? Hebr. 2. 9. and that God was in Christ, reconciling the whole world unto himself? 2 Cor. 5. 19. How far Christs intentions extended in his undertakings, would be too large to discuss, it will be sufficient at present to note, that the price Christ paid is sufficient in it self for the expiation of all sins, and that it extends to all sorts of sinners; notwithstanding this, we know from Scripture, that the greatest part of the world shall perish, even of those who are under the Gospel; Many are called, but few are chosen, and Christ doth expressly restrain that universality which many to little purpose contend for, when he saith, he laid down his life for his sheep, Joh. 10. 15. to redeem his Church, Acts 20. 28. and to save onely his own people, Matth. 1. 21. and for those who were given him of his Father, in contradistinction to the world, Joh. 17. 9. Therefore there is room left for enquiry, whether we be of the number of them who shall be saved by Christs undertakings for us. Such are

I. Repenting, returning sinners: so Christ tells you himself, Matth. 9. 13. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance:



tance: that is, such as are not righteous in their own opinion, for as if man had continued truly righteous, he had not stood in need of a Saviour: so if self-righteous, he shall receive no benefit by Christ: such he came not to call, but sinners. So, you'll say, we are all: yea, but humbled sinners; such as are inwardly convinced and truly humbled for sin. *Quest.* But doth not Christ call all? *Matth. 11. 28.* *Answ.* Yes, but mark the limitation: such as are weary, there's ease for such: so *Luke 19. 10.* *The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* So we were all lost, you'll say: True, but these are such as see themselves lost, and irrecoverably undone without Christ. The prodigal was lost long, but never returned to, nor was entertained by his Father, till he saw himself so, and mourned that he was so, *Luke 15. 18.* Christ's commission was to binde up such onely as mourn, and to proclaim peace, and the acceptable year of the Lord, to such onely, *Isa. 61. 1.*

**II. Believing sinners:** those are the terms upon which the Gospel offers salvation by Christ, for so runs the promise, *Mark 16. 16.* *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.* And Christ tells you himself; he came into the world for this end, *John 12. 46.* *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness.* And this was the design of God's sending Christ for sinners, that, *Whoever believed should not perish, John 3. 16.* This is the condition of the Covenant of grace and salvation, as Scripture every where expresseth: as *Rom. 10. 9, 10.* to this Paul directed the trembling payler, *Acts 16. 30, 31.* All a Christians life is in Christ, and faith is the hand that receives him, *John 1. 12.* Whatever a Christian derives from, or partakes of by Christ, as forgiveness, *Acts 10. 43.* is all by faith: the Spirit of Christ, *Gal. 3. 14.* inward puritie, *Acts 15. 9.* perseverance, *1 Pet. 1. 5.* son-ship, *Gal. 3. 26.* and at last, eternal salvation by Christ, *John 3. 36.* all which are received by faith.

**III. Reforming sinners.** Christ came not to save any man in his sins, but from his sins, *Tit. 2. 14.* *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquitie.* *Utrique venit medicus ad egrotum constat, sed ideo venit medicus ad egrotum, ne semper sit egrotus. Quod vult facere amat, non quod invenit,* saies S. *Augustin.* Whether do you then live, as those Christ came to save? Christ came not to save you onely from the guilt of sin, but from the power of sin, that sin might have no more dominion over you, *Rom. 6. 14.* So that let no presumptuous sinner flatter himself in a continuance of sin, upon this consideration, that Christ came to save sinners, for Christ saves and delivers them from sin here, whom he saves from wrath hereafter, *Luke 1. 74, 75.* And the promise of mercy is made

upon forsaking sin, Prov. 28. 13. *Whosoever confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy.*

Fourthly, Let us all heartily entertain this so acceptable a doctrine, as that message of Christ's coming to save sinners. Entertain it in your ear, by attendance upon the Gospel preached; but that is a small matter: welcome it in your hearts, by believing it; otherwise, it will not profit you; as it is said of them, Heb. 4. 3. *The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.* And not onely so, but in your lives too, by obeying it, and living suitably to the Gospel, which discovers this acceptable doctrine to you, Phil. 1. 27. *Let your conversation be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ.* The end of this Gospel-revelation was obedience and holiness, suitable to our belief: so the mysterie of Christ is said to be made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, Rom. 16. 26. for so our lives may witness our acceptance and hearty entertainment of this, as *πιστὸς λόγος*, a faithfull saying, and worthy of all acception, *That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinnes, ὃν ἡμεῖς ἐμὴ ἐρώ, of whom I am chief.* It was a fond opinion which the Manichees, and others of old maintained from this place of Scripture, *That Adam's soul was transfused into Paul's bodie*; because the Apostle saies here he was *πρῶτος*, the first; but he means not in time, but in nature and qualitie. *Primum se dixit non peccatorum ordine, sed peccati magnitudine*, saies Augustine. And that, I think, is not a much better interpretation, which Grotius puts upon the words; as if they were spoken *ἐξ ὑψηλῶς, ex summa modestia*; as if the Apostle had onely spoken by a Rhetorical modestie, as when he calls himself the least of the Apostles, 1 Cor. 15. 9. The Apostle sure intended not these words as complements. *Carve, ne existimes Apostolum modestie causâ mentitum*, saith Calvin. Whence it seems some, long before Grotius, had mis-interpreted the Apostle thus; as if he had but told an humble officious lye; perhaps as a bait to the applause of others, as it is the practise of some to pretend low thoughts of themselves, that so others may magnifie and extol them. But the Apostle spoke not to know what others thought of him, but he spoke the real sence, and inward perswasion of his soul, when he saith, *Of whom I am chief.* Why the Apostle speaks this; and how he could truly say it of himself (especially, as an Apostle converted, and brought home to Christ) I shall shew you in these eight particulars.

Consider the words, as

I. *Vox recognoscentis statum pristinum*: as they were the words of the Apostle sadly reflecting upon his former condition, while in the state of unregeneracie, casting his eyes backward upon his blasphemie

August. Tom.  
10. p. 202.



mie and \*persecution, *verse 13.* with which his life formerly, (though then conformed to the strictest Sect of the *Pharisees*) had been notoriously stained; so that though now a convert, yet he could not but reflect upon it, and in that respect entitle himself, *the greatest of sinners.* He saith, *I am,* because his former condition was fresh, and alive in his memorie. It is a very usefull meditation for true converts and sincere Christians, often to recollect and think of that miserable condition, which they lay in in their blood, before God reached out to them a hand of mercie; this the Apostle exhorts his converted believing Ephesians to, *Eph.*

*I. 11, 12.* and that the more to magnifie the riches of God's mercy, which he had mentioned at *verse 4.* So David, *Psal. 51. 3. I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.* Nothing promotes more a real thankfulness for, and pious admiration of mercie, then frequent reflexions on our natural misery: so it did here in the Apostle, *verse 13.* Besides, how will this meditation keep men humble, when they see all their receipts to be the product and issue of free-grace; and what miserable creatures they were before? See *Ezek. 20. 48.* and, *Ezek. 16. 63.* Of all the Apostles S. Paul was the humblest, who often reflected on his unconverted, natural condition. This also will put us on resolved serviceableness for God, to consider how much a dishonour (*Christians*) we were unto him in our natural condition. Paul, while unconverted, a \*furious persecuter of the Church, when converted, was the most zealous propagator of the Gospel, as labouring more abundantly then all the rest of the Apostles, *1 Cor. 15. 10.* And how watchfull, and circumspect in their walking will they be, who oft think of the falls of their natural estate? A mariner in a second voyage will carefully avoid that rock, on which in a former he was like to be shipwrackt; so will a true convert of those sins, which would have ruined him, if infinite mercy had not stepped in for his relief and pardon. Who more endeavouring against sin then S. Paul, while he was running his Christian race? *1 Cor. 9. 27.* And now as reflecting on his unconverted estate, he calls himself the greatest of sinners.

That's the first.

*I I. Vox aggravantis peccatum.* The Apostle here, respecting the circumstances of his sins, whereby they were aggravated and heightened, calls himself, *the greatest of sinners*, because joyned with a furious persecution of the Church of God, it being especially with rage and malice, *Acts 26. 10, 11.* Many of the Saints did I shut up in prison, having received authoritie from the chief Priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them: And I

\* Recolite Saulum, & invenietis Paulum; attenditis ad Paulum, & obliti estis Saulum; attenditis ad Pastorem, obliti estis lupum. August. Tom. 10. p. 200.

\* Nemo acrior inter Persecutores, ergo nemo prior inter peccatores. August. Tom. 10. p. 202.

punished them oft in every Synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Where you see the height of iniquitie, to which nothing was wanting but a clear knowledge, to make it unpardonable; upon the account of which circumstance of his sin, he esteems himself unworthy the name of an Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. 9. And another heightning aggravation of his sin was, That it was done in unbelief, verse 13. where some for, *because*, read, *quavis*, *although*, and so make it an aggravation of his sin, and a further commendation of the mercy of God in pardoning; for his ignorance and unbelief, must needs have been in a great measure wilfull and affected, he enjoying the means of faith and knowledge. A high sin questionless. *Alensis* gives this reason of it, *Quia destruit fundamentum totius Christiana religionis*: whereas other sins strike but at some particular vertue. And besides, if this be final, it is the cord which ties all other sins upon the soul, and makes it in the event damning. And then, farther, as they were sins against knowledge; the Apostle having been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; and that's a high aggravation of sin. James 4. 17. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.* Now the Apostle eying all these, calls himself the greatest of sinners: whence observe a distinguishing character between a sincere Christian, and an hollow-hearted hypocrite: he extenuates and lessens his sin, with the unjust steward writing down fiftie for an hundred, but heightens his but seeming and pretended holiness; the world shall hear of it, if the Pharisees fast twice a week, and tithe mint and cummin: but a sincere humble Christian in mentioning his graces and gifts is lowly, but full and express in aggravating his sins; thus good Hagar, Prov. 30. 2, 3. *Surely, I am more brutish then any man, and have not the understanding of a man: I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the Holy.* The Publican smites upon his breast, with a *God be mercifull to me a sinner*, &c. And we need go no further for an example of both, then our Apostle; who of Saints counted himself the least, Ephes. 3. 8. but here of sinners the greatest.

That's the second.

III. *Vox esse accusantis*: The words of a self-condemning and self-accusing Christian. S. Paul's eyes were turned inward upon his own sins, not prying too nicely into the sins of other men; so that this speaks at once the Apostles humilitie and charitie; his charitie prompted him to think and judge better of others, though his humilitie would not suffer him to think otherwaies of himself. And here is another character of a true Christian, as distinct from an hypo-



hypocrite : hypocrites are quick-sighted, eagle-eyed abroad , but blinde at home. Some shifting off their sins to others , nay , to God himself, rather then charge themselves with them. It is an hereditarie miscarriage, derived from our first parents , *Gen. 3. 12.* Another sort *seemingly zealous*, and rigid in censuring others, never condemning themselves, though guiltie perhaps of greater sins, then what they so severely censure in others : believe it, to censure uncharitably in others what we reform not in our selves, is but counterfeite and hypocritical. That zeal, which is ready to consume others, and yet burns not up our *own corruptions*, is but the wilde-fire of passion and selfish design. The Pharisee, whose prayer was hypocrisie, would see oft a mote in his brothers eye, and pretend to a skill and desire to pull it out, when he neglects the beam in his own. He that is so much abroad, it is to be feared he seldome turns his eyes inward, to consider the plague of his own heart. The Pharisee boasts, that he *is not as the Publican*; but the good Publican strikes upon his own breast, and saith, *Lord be mercifull to me a sinner.* It is our dutie, Brethren, to reprove others, but not uncharitably to condemn them. This *censorious uncharitableness* is commonly the issue of a *Pharisaical* opinion of a mans own righteousness. It was otherwise with the disciples, *Mark 14. 18, 19.* they say not, *Is it he?* or, *he?* but each ready to suspect and accuse himself, *Lord, is it I?* so the Apostle here accuseth himself by a particular indictment, here in the gross, *of whom I am the chief.* Whereas in respect of others, a Christian thinks it better to wrong himself by an over *charitable credulitie*, then others by *unjust censures and suspicions*, but before God none accuse themselves more, hereby magnifying more the *grace* of God in pardoning : *hac ejus accusatio est laus salvatoris*, saith *Ambrose*, *accusing himself he exalts his Saviour, who came into the world to save sinners*, of whom he accuseth himself as the chief.

That's the third.

IV. *Vox spiritualiter illuminati* : as the words of the Apostle *inwardly enlightened* to see and discern the nature of his former sins, and this is one thing in which every true Christian is enlightened. *S. Paul* in his unregenerate estate thought in his conscience, he was bound to oppose the Gospel of Christ, as he tells you himself, *Acts 26. 9.* but now he discovers the horrid nature of his *blasphemie*, and *persecution*, and *unbelief*, and therefore oft heightens it, *Gal. 1. 13.* *Carnal hearts* do not see the evil of sin, and therefore think it a light small matter; they'l be playing with the *serpent*, as not feeling the sting of it; but when a Christian *spiritually enlightened* sees sin through the *glass of the law*, and the *bloud of Christ*, it appears in its proper colours.

lours. Thus to S. Paul by the law sin appeared *exceeding sinfull*, Rom. 7. and himself here *The greatest of sinners*.

That's the fourth.

V. *Vox confitentis*: as the words of S. Paul confessing his sin. He was *primus in ordine confitentium*, saith Aretius upon the place, as readie to acknowledge his sin as any, and surely this is a great Christian *dutie*: however many now a-days are high-flown into raptures, and ecstasies, and cry down *Confession* and *Repentance* as *legal*. The Saints in Scripture have been expresse and frequent in this duty; David frequently in the *Psalms*, Psal. 32. 5. and fully, Psal. 51. 2, 4, 5. confesses his original corruption. Read holy Ezra's confession, Ezra 9. 5, 6. See Daniels holy and humble confession, Dan. 9. 4. he recounts particular sins, v. 5, 6. so continues till v. 16. thus Paul, v. 13. and here, *I am the chief of sinners*. Hereby Christians acknowledge their liableness to *Justice*, and magnifie the grace of God in pardoning, as S. Paul, v. 13. yet he obtained *mercy*. Much like this of the Apostle is that of Tertullian, in his book de *pœnitentia*, *Peccator omnium notarum sum, nec ulli rei nisi pœnitentiæ natus*: that is, *I am a most notorious sinner, as if I were born to no other end, then to confess, and repent*. That brings me to the sixth thing, as they are,

VI. *Vox dolentis*: as the words of S. Paul mourning and sorrowing, in the remembrance of his former, and meditation of his present sins: *ut se humiliet adhuc dolet de sua incredulitate*, saith Ambrose upon the place; the Apostle still mournes upon the consideration of his unbelief. Though many even of those, who crucified Christ, as those Acts 2. were brought to a sence of their sin, yet none more then Paul, who now converted, yet grieves for his former unbelief. True Christians are tender hearted, & so easily melted into sorrow. It is one thing, which God workes upon the heart in *conversion*, viz. a melting tenderness under sin. How doth Mary Magdalen, formerly notorious, shed a fountain of teares? how tender was Davids heart, when he had cut of Sauls garment, and numbred the people, 2. Sam. 24. 10. And Christians oft mourn, (even after God hath pardoned them) that they should by sin formerly so much dishonour him. I question not but upon this account David watered his couch with his tears; and some say Peter never heard the cock crow, but he wept for the denial of his Master: and Austin in his confessions often aggravates and heightens his sin, while a Manichee, so the Apostle here reflecting upon his former blasphemy, &c. seemes with a tear in his eye to cry out, *Of whom I am the chief*.

VII. *Vox ingemescens sub onere*; the Apostle speaks this as sensible of the burden of sin; so that he was the greatest of sinners in respect of

of



of his own *sence*, and *feeling*. As suppose one sick of the *tooth-ach*, or *head-ach*, cries out, *No pain is like my pain*, because he feels that by experience, but other mens by *speculation* only; so the Apostle here from an inward *sence* of his own sins calls himself *the chief of sinners*. Here's again a *Character* of a true Christian, He is one, to whom sin is a real burthen, whereas a wicked man makes light of it, sin is there in its proper place. A wicked man is in his *Element*, when sinning, and *Elementa non gravitant in propriis locis*; but a Christian having a heart of *flesh* so tender, the least sin is a burthen to him. David complains of his broken bones by reason of sin: and that his sins were a burthen too *heavie* for him to bear; and Paul here confesseth himself *the chief of sinners*.

VIII. *Vox fidei applicantis*: the words of S. Paul by a particular faith applying to himself that general truth, that Christ came into the world to save sinners. As if he should have said, \* I am the chief of those sinners which Christ came to save. This is the special art of saving faith, to bring down universal truths by particular application, so did David, Psal. 116. 5, 6, 7. See, he applies the general mercy of God to himself. It is not enough to believe in the general that Christ came to save sinners (for this is but *historical*, which the devils believe, and tremble because they have no part in him, and thousands will be damned, who profess they believe this:) but true saving faith is a *fiducial* reliance upon, and particular application of Christ, as coming to save me in particular, as S. Paul did, Gal. 2. 20. 10, 2. Tim. 1. 22. and hereafter there is *laid up* for me a crown, &c. c. 4. v. 8. and here he brings down this general doctrine by a particular application to himself, of whom I am the chief.

#### Application.

I. See hence why this Doctrine finds no more entertainment in the world, why no more acceptable to most, this is the account, they do not see themselves the chiefest of sinners but the generality are either secure in sin, or else resting upon some self-righteousness, and so Christ is not valued or accepted.

II. Let sinners hence be encouraged to come to Christ. Paul here the chief of sinners (arrived at a greater height of sin, then 'tis likely thou hast, viz. blasphemy and persecution) hath found mercy, which was partly for this very end, that God ostenderet ceteris, qui inimico tam benevolus exstiterit, qualis esset futuris ad se decurrentibus, saith Ambrose. Si Paulus sanatus, ego quare despero? ut hoc dicerent homines, ideo Saulus ex persecutore factus Apostolus, so Austin. As a Physitian, when he comes first to a place, ventures upon the most desperate patients, that they may encourage others to go to the same Physitian, saying, \* He cured me, &c. No discouragement then to humbled

\* Ad quos venit primus ego sum. Aug. tom. 10. pag. 200.

\* Vide plura apud August. tom. 10. pag. 202.

humbled sinners from the greatness of their sins; Paul is here a monument of mercy, and a pattern, v. 16.

III. Take hence one ground of the Saints' patience, under the reproaches and calumnies of the world: you can scarce think so ill of them, as they do of themselves; and therefore though they deserve them not from you, and your accusation is false, yet they can see God just in opening your mouthes to reproach them; as David of cursing Shimei, 2 Sam. 16. 10, 11. and so of scoffing Michal, 2 Sam. 6. 22, I will yet be more vile. In this Christians imitate their Saviour, who, when he was reviled, answered not again. Paul was esteemed a babler, a mad-man, a murderer, not worthy to live, yet he gloried in all reproaches, and acknowledged himself the chief of sinners.

IV. See hence both the power, and the freeness of the grace of God, which so suddenly made the wolf a lamb, the chiefest of sinners, the greatest of the Apostles. You can imagine no desert, or meritorious preparation in a blasphemer, and persecutour, to the grace of God; himself attributes it onely to mercy, vers. 13, 14. and Gal. 1. 13, 15.

V. See the infinite and unsearchable abyss of divine wisdom, that makes a persecutour a preacher, and he who formerly blasphemed his name, now a chosen vessel to bear his name before the Gentiles and Kings, Acts 9. 15. This is best resolved into Gods absoluteness, who makes use of whom he will. Though it may be he chose his Apostles some of great sinners, *ut non tam voce, quam exemplo concionarentur de gratuita remissione peccatorum*, as Egidius notes, That they might preach free-grace by their Examples, as well as Sermons. As the people said of the other Saul the King, 1 Sam. 10. 11. Is Saul also among the Prophets? so may we of this Saul, Is he among the Apostles? O the depth of the wisdom of God! &c. Rom. 11. 33.

VI. Let us all then look after this particular faith, whereby we may receive Christ; rest not upon this general belief, that Christ came into the world to save sinners in the gross; thou mayest perish for all this; but apply Christ particularly to thy self, as Thomas, My Lord, and my God, Joh. 20. 28. and the Blessed Virgin, Luke 1. 47. and S. Paul, Who loved me, &c. The promises of the Gospel will be but dry breasts to thee, no comfort from them, if thou drawest not from them by the mouth of a special faith: and to believe that Christ came to save sinners, will be little comfort or advantage to you, unless by a particular relyance you rest on Christ, and by a special application receive him, as S. Paul, Gal. 2. and here, of whom I am chief; viz. of those who flie to Christ for salvation, and to whom this is an acceptable doctrine, That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of which, saith he, I am the chief.

FINIS.

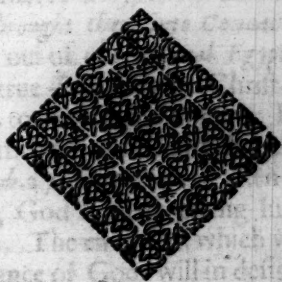


*A*  
LOOKING-GLASS  
FOR  
MAGISTRATES.

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Sermon preached September 29. in Cam-  
bridge, at the Major's entring up-  
on his Office.

By JOHN FROST, B.D. then  
Fellow of S. JOHNS Colledge, and  
late Preacher in Olaves-Hartstreet  
in London.

*Bonus Magistratus servus Publicus. Six. Senens.*



CAMBRIDGE:  
Printed by John Field, Printer to the University.  
*Anno Dom. MDCLVII.*

# LOOKING-GLASS FOR MAGISTRATES

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## JUDGES 2. 7

*And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the Elders that out-lived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel.*



Ad we no other argument to convince us of the necessity and usefulness of *Magistracie*; not onely for preserving the *Peace of the State*, but for the security of the *Service and Worship of God*, and *protection of Religion*; it were sufficient to consider that constant provision, which the providence of God, watching over the Jews (then his own peculiar Church and people.) made for succession in this Office. For proof of which we need go no further then Joshua in the Text, Moses his Successour as well in his *Priest* as *Government*, designed and appointed to it before Moses his death by God himself, and that upon Moses his request, who well understood the necessity of good *Magistrates*, Numb. 27. 16, 17. Which request God granted him, and therefore commanded him to set apart Joshua for his Successour, who might perfect that work he had begun. In which some observe a *mysterie*: That Moses led the people out of Egypt, but Joshua brought them into Canaan. The Law may be a means to bring us out of our natural Egyptian bondage and darkness; but onely the true Joshua, Jesus Christ, of whom Joshua was a type, can bring us to our celestial Canaan. But to omit allegories, I finde Joshua was thrice appointed to this office. First, Deut. 31. 7, 14. Again, Numb. 27. 22, 23. And then the third time after the death of Moses, God himself giving him his charge and commission, Josh. 1. 1, 2. The end of all which was, as to give the people the greater assurance of Gods will in designing him, which might command their more ready obedience to him, so for the greater encouragement of Joshua himself, to undertake with courage and resolution those great and difficult services God had laid out for him, as being hereby assured of divine assistance to enable and carrie him through, which God himself suggests to Joshua, Josh. 1. 9. And as Joshua received his commission and power by a remarkable and immediate designment of God; so he with much zeal and answerable success, managed it for the glory of God: For the people

served the Lord all the days of *Joshua*, &c. The words represent to us three things.

1. The pattern of a good Magistrate. 2. Upon Religion. 3. To look that the people serve God. For, sure, this was the issue of *Joshua's* zeal and pious care of Religion, that that people, who were so stiff-necked, as that they oft murmured and repined under *Moses* government, in-somuch that *Moses* could not stir up into the Mount to converse with God, but presently they fall to idolatry, (Exod. 32. 1, 2.) that this people should for the space of between twenty seven & twenty eight years, (for so long *Joshua* ruled, by the computation of the learned *Masius*) keep them to the true worship and service of God, spake certainly his diligent care and zeal. Which is further evident from *vers.* 11, 12, 13. where we read that *Joshua* was no sooner dead, but the people fall to idolatry, and serving *Baal*, and *Astartoth*, in stead of serving God. These three particulars shall bound my discourse and your patience.

First, for the pattern of a good Magistrate, *Joshua*. And so he may be in these nine particulars.

1. His resolved piety, which you may read, *Josh.* 24. 15. Thus when God bad *Moses* to set apart *Joshua* for this office, he described him thus, *Numb.* 27. 18. A man in whom is the Spirit, not onely the Spirit of government, but of sanctification and holiness: and such should all Magistrates be, Men fearing God. Such *Jethro*, though an Heathen, would have *Moses* choose, *Exod.* 18. 21. That accursed *Machiavel* allows a shadow and appearance of Religion as usefull unto Magistrates, but the power and realitie pernicious. A principle perhaps suiting with the designs of a carnal Politician, but not of a Christian Magistrate, who lies under all possible obligations to the reality of Religion and Piety. If there were nothing else, the law of an ingenuous gratitude challengeth this, as considering that promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South: But God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another, *Psal.* 75. 6, 7. Therefore considering that the powers that be are ordained of God, *Rom.* 13. 1. it must needs engage him to the pious service of that God, from whom he derives his power. But, besides this, there are many other weightie engagements to this real piety, as the command of God, *Psal.* 2. 10, 11. and the pious examples of good Magistrates. *David*, a man after Gods own heart, danced before the Ark, *2 Sam.* 6. 20. Some think this intimated, *Josh.* 1. 1. where *Joshua* is called *Moses* his Minister, to note (saith *Fernus*) that none is fit to be a Magistrate and to rule others



others by his laws, but he, who hath first learned obedience to the law of God, *Nisi qui prius legi Dei se subjecerit*. Add to these the rules Scripture gives to Magistrates, who are called Gods, *Psal. 82. 1.* They have the stampe of his authority, and should therefore bear the image of his holiness. They are called *Fathers*, *Job 25. 16.* which is *Nomen pietatis & potestatis*, saith *Tertullian*: an engagement to piety as well as a title of authoritie; and speaks their duty to be above the people in holiness, as well as honour, in goodness as well as greatness. Besides, piety and Religion is necessary in a Magistrate, that he may (as he ought) rule in the fear of God, as *David* saith, *2 Sam. 23. 3.* This will make him just to others, humble in himself, faithfull in the discharge of his calling and particular trust, conscientious in his actions: and it will keep Magistracie from degenerating into Tyranny, command the peoples obedience, and beget in them reverence and awfull respects to their Superiours, and promote the happiness and security of Government, most of which you have excellently expressed, *Deut. 17. 10.* Besides, there is no such cement and sure tie of affections and love between Magistrate and people, as Religion is: none so fit to rule others as those, in whose souls piety and the fear of God rules and beares sway. Observe what *Moses* saith to the people, *Deut. 1. 13.* Take ye wisdom and understanding, and know among your tribes, known for Religion and the fear of God. The great duty of Magistrates is to appear against, and discountenance sin in others, which an ungodly Magistrate will never do to the purpose. Nothing makes publick persons more fearfull to appear against sin in others, (whether Ministers in reprovings, or Magistrates in punishing) then guilt at home, fearing lest, as the Apostle saith, *Rom. 2. 1.* wherein they judge others, they should condemn themselves, seeing they themselves do the same things. But if all this prevail not, if neither the honour of God, nor their own good; yet tenderness and pity to the people under them should prevail upon them to be religious, lest their sins involve the people in publick misery, as the sins of Magistrates oft do: *Quicquid delirant Reges, &c.* Seventy thousand of the people died for *Dauids* sin in numbring them, *2. Sam. 24. 15.* Therefore if Magistrates regard either Gods glory, their own happiness, or their peoples safety, they must write after *Foshuas* copy, viz. piety towards God. That is the first: as parts of, or helps to this piety,

**I I.** His diligent study of the word of God. For questionless, what was Gods command to him was his practise, and that ye may see, *Foshua 1. 8.* An excellent employment, a most proper exercise for a Christian Magistrate; which therefore we have under the divine

command, *Deut.* 17. 18, 19. The Magistrates power is not absolute and arbitrary, but limited and contracted, and the exercise of this power should be answerable to, and regulated by the rule of the word of God: not by emergencies of State, or the like, but by the word. Their laws are unjust, their power is pernicious, their commands tyrannical, if the one enact, or the other impose a thing contrary to the word. It was the just commendation of *Alphonso* king of *Aragon*, that he conversed much with the word of God, which he perused ten times over with a *Comment*. It is the Magistrates duty to maintain and propagate the true worship and service of God, as I shall shew more anon. But how to distinguish the true worship and service of God from idolatry or superstitious worship can be known onely by the word of God, in which God hath laid down a platform and Idea of the true manner how he will be worshipped.

III. *Prayer and devotion to God.* God when he gave *Joshua* his charge, *Josh.* 1. 2. bad him *Arise*, &c. Surge. Videtur *Joshua* in oratione jacuisse, saith *Ferus* upon the place. Prostration was then the usual posture of prayer. A duty well becoming a Christian Magistrate, which *David* knew well, and therefore resolves *Evening, and morning*, and at noon to pray, and cry aloud unto God, *Psalm* 55. 17. It is reported of *Charles the fifth*, that he was so frequent in his devotion, that his Courtiers were wont to say, *Quod sepius cum Deo, quam cum hominibus loqueretur*, That he conversed more with God, then with men. And truly, they who seriously consider the burthen of Magistracy, and (through the turbulency, disquiet, and unruliness of many spirits) the difficulty of managing it, and how much wisdom and prudence is required to it, and withall that all the enablements, and assistances to go through it, come from above from God, will easily see, that prayer and devotion is necessary to a Magistrate. Magistrates should be men of knowledge and understanding; as it is said of *David*, that he was wise as an Angel of God, *2 Sam.* 14. 20. *Moses* bid the people seek out men of knowledge and understanding to be Rulers over them, *Deut.* 1. 13. The way to come by this wisdom is prayer: which *Solomon* was sensible of, when being put to his choice what to ask, he prayed for wisdom, *1 Kings* 3. 9. The same his father *David* had prayed for for him before, *1 Chron.* 22. 12. The Lord give thee wisdom and understanding: both to govern thy self and others. And the Apostle bids expressly those, who want wisdom, to ask it of God, *Jam.* 1. 5. And if ever this were needfull, then now certainly in our days. A skilfull Pilot and Mariner is most required in a storm, when the boisterous tumultuous waves threaten a ship-wrack: and wise and skilfull Magistrates



gistrates, to secure the Church from *splitting upon the rock of error and heresy*, or the State of *Anarchy and confusion*. *And with courage and resolution to undertake any service for God, though upon the greatest improbabilities, and most difficult disadvantages.* If he sends him against *Jericho*, onely with *Rams horns*, he undertakes it. This God oft urgeth upon *Joshua*, Josh. 1. 18. *Only be strong, and of a good courage.* A good qualification of a Christian Magistrate; *Courage*, to stand up for God, and *Courage* to appear against sin. *Courage* to bear up against reproaches and calumnies of men (for these you must look to meet with) that you be not afraid of the face of man, Deut. 1. 17. *Alexander* was wont to say, that this was *verè regium*, well becoming Authority to do well, and to bear ill. such a *Courage* and equal greatness and magnanimity of spirit becomes a Magistrate, as may neither be over-heightened by anger and passion, which oft makes Magistracie degenerate into a cruel *Tyrannie*; nor yet emasculated and weakned by timorous low fearfulness, which may cause him to pervert justice; whilest he fears either the Malefactours greatness, or his own disgrace and inconvenience. *Solomon's Throne* was upheld by *Lions*. A *Lions* heart upholds the Magistrates power and authority; whilest a base pusillanimous cowardize betraies his Government to contempt, his person to reproach, and encourageth the people (whilest through his cowardize they promise themselves impunity) to confidence in sin & prophanenels. It was a brave resolution of *David* (which if all Magistrates, as it is their dutie, should take up, we should not see such an overflowing of open prophanenels) *Psal. 101. 7, 8. He that worketh deceit, &c.*

V. *The milde and sweet tenderness of his Government.* He rather chose to lead the people, then to drive them; to perswade, then to force them. An instance of this you have, *Josh. 1. 12, 13, 14. &c.* He might by his power have commanded and compelled them; or else justly stript and deprived them of that possession, which was allotted them by *Moses*, which was onely upon condition of their obedience in passing *Jordan*, Numb. 32. 29, 30. But see, he chose rather friendly to admonish and intreat them; and see the fruit of it, it overcame the people into obedience, *Josh. 1. 16, 17.* And no wonder *Joshua* was so tender and gentle, being instructed and educated by *Moses*, the meekest man upon the face of the earth, Num. 12. 3. A fit temper sure of a Christian Magistrate, as being that by which these Gods of the earth resemble the God of heaven. This is it which preserves and secures Government, Prov. 20. 28. The reason sure is, because nothing doth so powerfully, yet so sweetly command the peoples obedience. Thus *Abjalom* stole away the hearts of the people

people of Israel, 2 Sam. 13. 5. Whilest a morose imperious cruelty exasperates mens minds, and makes them tumultuous and rebellious; a sweet milde clemencie makes them facile and flexible. Historians observe, that the cruelty of Nero, Vitellius, Domitian, Heliogabalus & others betrayed them to hastie and violent deaths, whilest the sweetness and clemencie of Trajan, Augustus, Adrianus, and Titus Vespasian (who was hence called *delicia humani generis*) caused their longer life, and more honourable and natural death. Pliny tells us that the king of the Bees hath no sting: a Magistrate should be of such an equal temper, that neither by an overmuch facilitie he might encourage sin, nor yet by a too severe cruelitie oppress and tyrannize.

Bellarm. p. 95.

Mat. 13. 25.

Hom. Iliad. 3.

V I. His Vigilancie and watchfulness: of which we have an instance, Josh. 3. 1. And Joshua rose early in the morning, &c. A duty, which lies much upon Magistrates: Continual dangers attend them, & difficulties offer themselves to them: & they must be watchfull, lest, whilest they sleep, the enemy comes and sows tares, the Tares of Heresie in the Church, or Faction and Sedition in the State. It becomes not a Magistrate to sleep a whole night, the Heathen could say. The Apostle exhorts them who rule, that they should do it with diligence, 1 Cor. 12. 8. Magistrates would do well to consider whose work they are employed in, viz. the work of God. His Deputies they are, and therefore may tremble to think of that, Jer. 48. 10. Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully, or, negligently, as it is in the Margent; and this may provoke them to care and vigilancie in their duty.

V I I. His care in the execution of justice: carefully enquiring into the cause, before he passed sentence. A pregnant instance of which we have, Josh. 7. in his dealing with Achan: how he searched, first into the Tribes, then into the Families, then into the households, till at last he found the person? Then he was as just and severe in punishing, as he had been diligent and carefull in enquiring. This becomes all Magistrates in the execution of justice, not to pass a rash judgement through a precipitate hast or passion; but to search out the truth of the cause, by which means they may come, neither to spare or countenance the sin, nor yet to wrong the person. God himself hath set Magistrates a pattern in this: before he would pour fire and brimstone upon Sodom, Gen. 18. 21. I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me: and if not, I will know. Which is spoke after the manner of men. This God commands Magistrates, Deut. 1. 16. Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously,



teously, &c. And again, *Deut. 17. 4.* And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and behold, it be true, &c. This was the custome of the *Romanes*, *Acts 25. 16.* not to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. Magistrates should be indeed blinde to the person, but seeing into the cause.

VIII. *His consulting the Priest of God, and asking and taking his direction:* which was God's command, and his practise, *Num. 27. 21.* And he shall stand before Eleazar the Priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgement of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. This was the practise of good Magistrates of old, as *Jehosaphat* asked counsel of *Micaiah*, *1 Kings 22. 5.* *David* of *Nathan*: *Hezekiah* of *Isaiah*, *2 Kings 19. 2.* *Theodosius* of *S. Ambrose*: and it would speak the humilitie and the pietie of the Magistrates to do so still. This good and advantage we should likely finde by it, that Magistrates would rule more according to the word of God, and be less acted by carnal interests, and worldly policies and designs.

IX. And lastly, *His publick spiritedness; his minding the common interest, and preferring the publick good of the people before his private advantage.* A signal instance of which we have in dividing the land, *Josh. 19. 49.* When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to *Joshua* the son of *Nun* among them. He might have taken first, and the greater part too; but he prefers the peoples good before his own. This excellently suits with a good Magistrate, who should not seek great things for himself, or to exalt himself, or promote his own interest; but to carrie on the publick good and concernment. It was good counsel which the Philosopher gave *Alexander* his scholar, *That he should undertake the government,*

*οὐκ εἰς ὄψιν, ἀλλὰ εἰς ἐργασίαν:* Not for his own honour so much, as for the peoples good. And the same Philosopher makes this distinction between a good and a bad Magistrate, *Ὁ δὲ καλὸς τὸ ἐαυτοῦ συμφέρον σκοπεῖ, ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸ πρὸς ἀρχαίαν, A bad Magistrate seeks his own, a good one the peoples good and profit.* When God promised *Moses*, *Exod. 32. 10, 11.* to make of him a great nation, but would destroy *Israel*; he had no minde to that preferment upon those terms. Nothing more contrary to the nature of the Magistrates office, which was appointed by God for the good of others, nothing more destructive to the publick, then private interest and base self-seeking, unworthy of a Christian, and more of a Magistrate, the

*Dieteric. p. 723.*

*Arist. Ethic. lib. 8. cap. 10.*

very end of whose office is the publick good.

Secondly, *The influence of a good Magistrate*; which he may have,

I. *By his good and religious example.* Examples are very prevalent, and of great force with most men: and by this *Joshua* promoted the service of God, Josh. 24. 24. You may see the peoples resolution to serve the Lord, which was sure the issue of *Joshua's* resolve, verse 15. *But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* Therefore *Origen*, after his usual manner, allegorizing upon this place, interprets all the days of *Joshua*, all the virtues of *Joshua*, as *Iustitia*, *Misericordia*, &c. whom *Hugo* and *Lyra* follow. The examples of great ones, of men in place and authority, do powerfully encline others, whether to good or bad, to sin or holiness. Observe what the Wiseman saith, Prov. 29. 12. *If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.* As it is said of *Israel*, that their leaders made them to erre, Esay. 9. 16. This was the account of the *Pharisees* rejecting Christ, *John* 7. 48. *Have any of the rulers believed on him?* Thus the *Israelites* wrote after the copie of *Solomons* Idolatrie, 1 Kings 11. 5, 7, 33. How is *Feroboam* branded with this, that he made *Israel* to sin, viz. the example and president of his Idolatrie: 1 Kings 14. 16. Their Religion or Idolatrie ebbed and flowed according to the temper of their Kings. *S. Augustine* speaking of that youth in *Terence*, who was encouraged to the sin of Adulterie by the example of their God *Jupiter*, meditates thus, *Vide quemadmodum se concitat ad libidinem celesti quodam Magistro*: so men are emboldned by the sins of Magistrates to commit the same as they, whom Scripture calleth *God's*. There is a kinde of Sovereignty in the examples of great ones over mens lives and actions; and as *Lactantius* notes, men account it, *Obsequii quoddam genus Regis vitia imitari*; and therefore cast of all pietie, *nè Regi scelus exprobrare viderentur*, lest their contrarie vertues might seem to upbraid their Governours vices. Therefore Magistrates upon this account are engaged to the service of God, lest they incur the guilt of other mens sins, and by their example countenance those sins, which by their sword of justice they should punish. Wickedness invalidates the Magistrates authority, and weakens his hands in the execution of justice, and encourageth sin in others; as the *Egyptians* esteemed it gracefull and their dutie, to halt on that legge on which their King limped. On the contrary, a Magistrates religious example provokes piety in others. This makes Religion glorious and lovely in the eyes of others, when it shines with the rays of greatness and Majestie. *David*, by his liberal contribution to the building of the Temple, provokes the people to a willing benevolence,

*August. Conf.*  
lib. 1. cap. 16.

*Lactan. instit.*  
l. 5. c. 6.



lence, 1 Chron. 29. 6, 7. &c. The *Ninevites* humble themselves by the example of their king, *Jonah* 3. 6. There may perhaps be something to this purpose in that expression, *Hagg.* 2. 23. where God saith of *Zerubbabel*, that he will make him as a seal, or a signet, to intimate the care and account God makes of good Magistrates, as men do of a Ring or Seal, he hath them continually in his hand, see, what an impression Great-ones may make upon the people, and how readily the people will receive that Signature and impression of Holiness, which they see engraven upon their Governours and Superiours. This then may engage Magistrates to Holiness, that they may go before others in a holy life. It was the honour of that *Romane Cesar*, that he was never heard to say, *Ite Milites*, but *Venite Commilitones*.

— Ignave, venire

Te Cesar, non ire jubet.

A most prevalent course: for this makes the people conceive of the Magistrates commands as equal and reasonable, when they see Holiness and Religion, not onely enacted by their laws, but legible in their lives.

That's the first.

I I. By punishing sin. Heretofore appeared *Joshua's* zeal, in causing *Achan* to be stoned, *Joshua* 7. 25. This is part of the Commission God hath given you; to this end he hath put a Sword into your hand, *Rom.* 13. 4, 6. and *1 Pet.* 2. 14. Magistrates should punish sin without fear or favour, by an impartial execution of the Laws, as for *Sabbath breaking* (a reigning sin) *swearing*, *drunkenness*, &c. Nor be *Gallioes*, when these sins are brought before you, *You care for none of these things*, *Acts* 18. 17. Magistrates should be zealous in punishing *First-Table-sins*; for the *Second-Table-sins*, such as *Thefts*, *Murders*, and the like, are the issue and birth of *Atheisme*, *Swearing*, *Sabbath-breaking*, &c. as, I suppose, you have heard men, when brought to suffer (then we may judge them most serious) crying out of their *Sabbath-breaking*, as that which brought them to it.

Thus a Magistrate may promote the service of God, by punishing Irreligion and Profaneness, &c.

I I I. By countenancing and encouraging the godly; viz. those who desire to walk strictly with, and attend the publick service and Ordinances of God. Thus did *David*, *Psal.* 101. 6. *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithfull of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.*

I V. By upholding the publick worship of God, and bringing the people to the publick Ordinances. Thus did *Joshua*, if we credit *Bren-*

*rius*, who gives this as the reason, why wickedness prevailed so much after *Joshua's* death, *Quia post Ioshuam ministerium collapsum erat*. Then the Ordinances and Ministry were neglected; upon which followed Atheisme, and contempt of God, and that let in an inundation of Profaneness. I know Religion is an act of the minde and soul, and so not liable to any outward restraint, but is onely subject to him, who hath an absolute command and Sovereigntie over the conscience: but conformitie to an *outward worship* may be commanded by a Superiour, without any Tyrannie over conscience, or infringement of Christian libertie. I know the Spirit of God can onely put them in, but, I believe, it is the Magistrates dutie and charge to see them brought to the pool.

Read Theodoret. l. 1. c. 2.

V. *By protecting and countenancing the Ministry of the word of God, and the publick preaching of the Gospel.* Magistrates are compared to *Gates* in Scripture, *Ruth 3. 11.* intimating their dutie to *let in*, and give a *passage* to the Gospel. Then the Church and State is like to flourish, sin discountenanced, Religion propagated, when *Moses* and *Aaron* go hand in hand together; the Magistrate to correct sin, the Minister to reprove; when the Magistrate makes use of the Ministers direction, and the Minister enjoys the Magistrates protection. It is said of good king *Jehosaphat*, that *he sent princes to teach in the cities of Judah*, 2 Chron. 17. 7. not that they did publickly dispense the word; for they had Levites with them, *verse 8.* and they taught, *verse 6.* But they were sent to *provide for*, and *countenance* the Levites in that office; and this is certainly the Christian Magistrates duty, to protect the Ministers of the Gospel,

1. *In their repute and credit*: lest the Gospel come to be scorned; as we have found by lamentable experience; that, since the Embassadours of the Gospel have been disrespected, and opprobries of ignorant men cast upon them to cloud their credit; the Gospel hath been undervalued, errors multiplied, the Scriptures questioned and vilified: and, I fear, the Magistrates will scarce wash their hands from much guilt of all this.

2. *In their maintenance and just rights.* *Famem ministrorum sequitur Fames verbi*, as *Luther* long since foretold, *That famishing the Ministers would usher in a Famine of the word.* And if ever the maintenance of the Ministry comes to be arbitrary, we should have none but *Micha's* Levites, who serve for ten *shekels* by the year, and a *suit of apparel*, and his *victuals*. This is Scripture, *Judg. 17. 10.* And if you mark the circumstance of the story, it was when there was *no king in Israel*, &c. *vers. 6.* And that will befall the Ministers, which



which God threatned as a curse upon *Elie's* house, 1 Sam. 2. 36. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver, and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the Priests offices, that I may eat a piece of bread. Would you account him a friend to the *childe*, that should starve the *nurse*, that she can give no milk to it: no better friends are they (pretend what they will) who would starve the Ministers, and so rob the people of the sincere milk of the word, by which they should grow, 1 Pet. 2. 2. This Scripture speaks of as the badge of bad Magistrates. A persecuting *Ahab*, that counted *Elijah* the troubler of *Israel*, 1 Kings 18. (the language of too many now adays) and those ungodly Princes, who cast *Jeremy* into the *dungeon*, Jer. 37. 15. Good *Hezekiah* was of another spirit and temper. See his remarkable zeal, 2 Chron. 31. 2. that the people might not want the service of God: and vers. 4. he orders the Priests and Levites maintenance, that they might neither want subsistence nor encouragement. A good pattern for good Magistrates, who desire to promote the worship and service of God.

V.I. By building or repairing the places of Gods worship and service. Thus we finde *David* both by his example and entreaty prepare for the building of the Temple, 1 Chron. 29. 2, 3. *Solomon* building it. It was *David's* trouble, and that which he looked upon as an absurdity, that he should live in an House of Cedars, and the Ark of God remain within curtains, 2 Sam. 7. 2. Thus *Josias*, 2 King. 12. 5, 6, 7, 8. *Josiah*, 2 King. 22. 3, 4, 5. took care for repairing it. And it spoke the pious care of *Constantine*, that after the Church was come out of those ten furious persecutions, he caused the *Idol Temples* to be shut up, and the *Christian Churches* demolished by *Dioclesian* to be reedified. And this piece of promoting the service of God you are not ignorant how your Magistrate, now in being, hath imitated in reedifying that place of worship formerly famous for *Perkins* and others; which as you cannot without ingratitude but acknowledge as a testimony of his affection to your town (thus they argued of their centurion to Christ, Luke 7. 5! For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a Synagogue) so we cannot without uncharitableness but apprehend it, as a good presage of his future zeal in his Government for promoting and upholding the true worship and service of God.

VII, And lastly, The influence of a good Magistrate will appear, if we consider the sad effects of the want of Magistracy. For which I shall lead you no further then this Church of the Jews: read at your leisure the five last Chapters of this book of Judges, where you may see the sinfull and miserable estate of the Jews, when there

Ferus, p. 472.

was *no King in Israel*; not only outrages and filthy abominations abounding, as the abusing of the *Levites Concubine* unto death, Chap. 19. But also Irreligion and Idolatry in the Church, *Micah* makes himself Idols, and an Ephod and Teraphim, and consecrates one of his sons for his *Priest*, Chap. 17. 5. and then the cause of all this is expressly set down, ver. 6. *In those days there was no King in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.* It is controverted what time all this fell out: *Iosephus* is of opinion, that this Idolatry fell out presently after *Ioshuaes* death, before there was either Judge or King in Israel. And you may observe how the Religion of Israel decayed upon the loss of a good Magistrate; as after the death of *Gideon*, Judg. 8. 33. and after the death of *Ioshua* in this Chapter, ver. 11, 12. who, whilest he lived, had such an influence upon them, that *the people served the Lord all the days of Ioshua*: and that's the second thing; *The influence of a good Magistrate upon Religion.*

Thirdly, *The charge and duty of a good Magistrate, To uphold religion and the worship of God*: which must be understood,

Theodoret. l. 5. cap. 16, 17.

I. Not of the immediate exercise of the publick worship of God, as preaching or administering the Sacraments. This is not the Magistrates duty, as *Theodoret* tells us of *Theodosius* the Emperour, who when he would come to have encroached upon some acts of worship peculiar onely to the Priest, *S. Ambrose* made him this answer, *Αλουργὶς βασιλέως ἔχ' ἱερέως ποιεῖν* His scarlet made him a Magistrate, not a Minister. These are acts of office and belonging to Ministers, as a peculiar and distinct function from Magistracy. Therefore for them to engage in these, is but *ἄλλοτριόεσσι κοπεῖν*, to be busy-bodies in other mens matters. But

Lavater in locum.

II. *Their charge is to uphold the Ordinances, and to propagate and countenance the publick worship of the true God, and preaching of his word.* *Jehoiadah*, when he anointed *Joash*, gave him the Book of the law to keep, 2 King. 11. 12. as minding him of his duty in taking care for Religion and the worship of God. This is that which was prophesied of Gospel-times, *Esay. 49. 23. Kings shall be thy Nursing-Fathers, and their Queens thy Nursing-Mothers, &c.* And in discountenancing all false worship of God. This hath been the constant practise, and the deserved glory and praise of good Magistrates: as it was the glory of *Jehoshaphat*, that he sent out *Levites* to preach in Judah, and Princes to protect and countenance them: as you read, 2 Chron. 17. 7, 8. *Non enim usurpârunt sibi functionem alienam*, saith *Lavater*. Therefore they did not preach; but through the zeal of that good Magistrate were sent to provide, that the word



word of God might be upheld by the civil authority. So he that shall read, 2 Kings. 23. will evidently see *Josiah's* care for Religion in his destroying *Idolatry*, and providing for the teaching of the law. *Hezekiah* provides for the keeping of the *Passover*, 2 Chron. 30. 1. *Darius* makes a publick edict, that the God of *Daniel* onely should be worshipped, Dan. 6. 26. And, to name no more, *Joshua* here: what care did he take for the worship of God? See, how he exhorts the people to it, *Josh.* 24. 14. And this is the duty of every good Magistrate upon a fourfold account.

1. To secure the peoples obedience. Observe how ready an obedience the people gave to *Joshua*, *Josh.* 1. 17. According as we hearkened unto *Moses* in all things, so we will hearken unto thee, &c. And truly, I think, there is no more effectual means to keep the people in obedience, then to uphold the Ordinances. For the word of God, where it converts not, it oft civilizeth, and layes a restraint and curbe upon mens Spirits. It takes cognizance of, and reproveth, and censures those sins (inward lurking sins) which the civil sword cannot reach. *Si vis omnia tibi subicere, subice rationi*, saith *Seneca*: I will say *Pietati*. They will be more readily subject to the Magistrate, who are kept in subjection to and compliance with the Ordinances of God. It was a notable trial which *Constantine* made of his subjects: He pretended, that those who would sacrifice to the *Idol gods*, should secure their preferments at Court; and those who refused; should forthwith be banished and stript of their preferment. A great part (not knowing the Emperours design) complied with the Heathens *Idolatry*; whom presently the good Emperour caused to be excluded from the Court, giving this reason of it, *Πῶς βασιλεῖ πιστὴν φυλάξαι*, &c. How shall they ever keep their fidelity to me, who have already cast off their religion to God. And our own sad experience tells us (he is wilfully blinde, that sees it not) that the Magistrates have no greater enemies, then those, who have thrown off the publick Ordinances and service of God, and are crept into houses. Their pretence is against the Ministry, but they are enemies to the Magistracy. As I am informed, some scattered papers have been in this Town to that effect: and they can spit damnation in the Magistrates, as well as in the Ministers faces. They pretend to be onely against bad Magistrates, and they would have the civil sword onely in the hands of the *Saints*; but then the next thing is, they must be accounted the onely *Saints*; so that the design is, either no Magistracy at all, or else they are the onely *Saints* (forsooth) must have it. And truly this would be no other then to put the sword into mad-mens hands.

2. To preserve the peace and safetie of the Nation. This is the Magistrates

*Seneca, Epist. 17.*

*Euseb. l. 1. c. 11. de vita Constant.*

Arist. Polit.  
lib. 7. cap. 8.

Liv. lib. 1.  
Decad. 3.

Socrat. Prae-  
fat. ad lib. 5.  
Hist.

gistrates duty, called therefore *Sheilds*, Psal. 47. 10. and *Foundations*, Psal. 82. 5. Both speak defence and protection. Which, sure, is most effectually consulted by upholding the *publick Ordinances* and worship of God. The two pillars *Jachin* and *Boaz* (that is, *Establishment* and *strength*) proceeded from the *Temple*, 1 Kings 7. 21. The true worship of God is the Nations security. The *Philosopher* among those things, without which a *Common-wealth* cannot long subsist, reckons *ἐπὶ τῷ Θεῷ ἐμπύκναι*, The care of Religion. *Troy* was safe, while the *Palladium* was preserved; but when in the *Trojan-war* that was taken, the citie soon after was stormed. While *Magistrates* endeavour to keep up the *publick exercises* of Religion, they do the State the best service that can be. Thus they interest God and his providence; his glory is wound up in their good, so long as Religion is consulted. *Livie* tells us it was a custome of the *Romans*, when they besieged any city, *Quibusdam sacris evocare genios loci tutelares*, ne eorum conatibus obstent; To endeavour to get out their tutelard gods, lest they should hinder their design. Religion and the service of God is the protection of the Nation. *Socrates* saith, that any one who considers it may easily observe, *Συμμεταστάτα τὰς δυνάμεις καὶ τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας δόγματα*; That the same miseries fell together both upon Church and State. The Peace of the one, and the Religion of the other, ebbed and flowed together. Sometimes disorders in the State usher'd in irreligion in the Church; and irreligion in the Church oftner brought confusion upon the State. And this Scripture speaks. Observe but how it fared with *Israel*, Judg. 5. 8. They chose new gods, then was war in the gates, &c. That's a notable place, 2 Chron. 15. 3. For a long season *Israel* hath been without the true God, and without a teaching Priest, and without Law. See the decay of Religion: and vers. 6. read the sad event of it, And Nation was destroyed of Nation, and citie of citie: for God did vex them with all adversitie. The *Calves* at *Dan* and *Bethel*, which *Feroboam* thought good policie to set up for the security of his kingdome, proved it's ruine, and betrayed his kingdome to the *Assyrians*, 2 Kings 17. Certainly Religion is the best policie to preserve and secure the blessing of God upon a Nation. How did God bless the house of *Obed-Edom* while the *Ark* remained with him? 2 Sam. 6. 12. and *Pharaoh* for *Josephs* sake, Gen. 39. 5. So *Micah*, Judg. 17. 13. Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my Priest. So the *publick Ordinances* and *Ministry* are the best blessings to a Nation. As *Elisha* said, when he saw *Elijah* taken from him; O my Father! The chariots of *Israel*, and the horsemen thereof (in those times therein consisted their strength). So if once the *publick Ordinances* and *Ministry* be taken from us, the strength and security of the Nation is gone.

3. To



3. To uphold the glory of the Nation. It is observable what the Lord saith to *Joshua*, (*chap. 5. 9. This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.*) after they had circumcised the people: that is, saith *Junius*, The profaneness of their Fathers in Egypt, whereby they grew careless and negligent of the Ordinances of God. God rolled away this reproach, *Dum per circumcisionem admittit ad celebrandum Pascha*, (saith learned *Masius*) which had for so many years been omitted. This the Apostle reckons as the great privilege, *Rom. 3. 2.* so also the great glory of the Jewish Nation, *chap. 9. 4.* When the Priests were slain, and the Ark taken, *Phinehas* his wife named her childe *Ichabod*, For (saith she) the glory is departed from Israel. So if ever we come to lose the Ministry and Ordinances, you may well sadly say, *The glory is departed from England.*

*Taylor, Types,*  
*pag. 47.*

*Masius in loc.*

4. To preserve their own glory, reputation, and honour. Thus was our good Magistrate in the Text glorious in the eyes of all the people, *Josh. 3. 7.* and *4. 14.* This is it which good Magistrates have always gloried in. I do not remember that the title of any one of *David's Psalms* is *David the King of Israel*, but the thirtieth Psalm is inscribed, *David the servant of the Lord.* He thought this surely the more glorious title. *S. Austin* tells us of *Theodosius* the Emperour, That *Ecclesia se membrum esse, magis quam in terris regnare gaudebat*: He accounted it more his glory and honour to be himself a member of the Church, then Emperour of the world: and in the 24 chapter of the same book, *S. Austin* tells us what Magistrates are truly to be accounted happy and honourable; Not those, who reign long, or whose conquests are many, successes great, or power arbitrary; *sed qui suam potestatem ad Dei cultum maxime dilatandum Majestati ejus famulam faciunt*; They who improve their power for the propagating the true Religion and service of God, and make their power subservient to his glory to which they are obliged as Christians, more as Magistrates set up by God for the protection of Religion. It is here spoken as the glorie and honour of *Joshua*, That the people served the Lord all his daies.

*S. August. de*  
*Civ. Dei,*  
*lib. 5. cap. 26*

The Application shall onely be briefly this: Let both people and Magistrate from all this learn their duty. Hath the Magistrate such an influence upon, and charge over Religion and the service of God? Then let the people learn a three-fold dutie to Magistrates.

First, Of prayer for them. This *David* foretells as part of the glory of *Solomons* government, that prayer shall continually be made for him, *Psal. 72. 15.* *Tertullian* shews that it was the constant practise of Christians, to pray even for the persecuting Emperours; *Hoc agite* (saith he) *boni Praesides, extorquete animam Deo supplicantem pro*

*Tertul. Apol.*  
*cap. 30, & 31.*

*Imperatore; Send these Christian souls to heaven breathing out prayers for their persecuting Emperour. And how much rather is it our duty to pray for those Christian Magistrates, who stand up for the defence and protection of the true worship of God? This is the use the Apostle makes of it, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: For Kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.*

Secondly, *Of honour and reverence.* Rom. 13. 7. Honour (saith the Apostle) *to whom honour is due*, as being the Ordination of God, bearing the image of his authority, as also because of those blessings, which God derives unto us by them as instruments. Entertain honourable thoughts of them, as set over you not by chance, but providence; and though by man as the instrument (in which respect the Apostle Peter calls it ἀνθρωπινὴ κτίσις, 1 Pet. 2. 13,) in electing, or the like; yet by God as the supreme Lord, in which respect S. Paul saith, all Magistrates are ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ τεταγμένοι. Honour them in your words, speak no evil of them, or their administrations, without just cause; Exod. 22. 28. *Thou shalt not curse the ruler of thy people.* Then give him an outward civil reverence in thy gesture and deportment. They certainly do not know the usefulness of Magistracie, who do not honour them. It was a Law among the Persians, that upon the death of the King, ἑνὶ ἀπολίᾳ πένθ' ἡμέρας, *That for five days no laws should be in force*, but every man left to do what he list, that they seeing the confusion, outrages, and inconvenience of the want of Magistrates, might afterwards more reverence and esteem them. And so should we, if we rightly considered the miserie of the want, or the happiness of enjoying good Magistrates.

Thirdly, *Of subjection and obedience.* This is the Apostles direct inference; Rom. 13. 1. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, &c.* But why? first, For his authority and greatness, vers. 4. He is Θεὸς ἀνάκτων. secondly, For his usefulness: it is τοῖς εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν, *It is to thee for good*; not onely for thy outward civil good, but for thy spiritual and eternal good; for thy natural good, protecting thy life; for thy moral good, by wholesome laws restraining thee from sin; thy civil good, in securing thy outward enjoyments and interests; and thy spiritual good, while he upholds and propagates the preaching of the word, and the exercise of religion: thus *Paraus* glosseth. And are they not prevailing arguments of our subjection? How doth the Apostle Peter charge and reprove those, who pretend their Christian liberty (as many do now adays) as an exemption from obedience and subjection to the civil power, 1 Pet. 2. 13. *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of man, &c. and vers.*



18. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. As is he had said, Use your liberty, but not to disobedience. Yet by way of caution let me add; Your obedience to them and subjection must be limited and restrained to those commands, which are agreeing to, or not contrary to the commands of God; for to such commands you owe the Magistrate no obedience. The three children refuse obedience to the Kings command of bowing to the golden image, Dan. 3. 18. And Scripture speaks of it as an Act of faith in the Midwives, to disobey the Kings command of killing all the male children, Exod. 1. 17. & Heb. 11. 23. Daniel prays three times a day, notwithstanding the edict to the contrary, Dan. 6. 10. Sauls servants refuse his wicked command in killing the Priests of the Lord, 1 Sam. 22. 17. *Idèò magnus est, quia cælo minor*, saith Tertullian. We must so give to Cesar the things that are Cesars, that we reserve to God the things that are Gods, Matth. 22. 21. In other things the Apostles resolution must be ours, Acts 4. 18.

Secondly, Hence, Magistrates, see your charge, and learn your dutie; no light or easie one. It is not onely the Crown upon your heads, but the Government upon your shoulders. *The earth is dissolved; I bear up the pillars of it*, saith David, Psal. 75. 3. Joyn you your shoulders to uphold it; joyn hand in hand together (I wish the Magistrates of both bodies would do it) to discountenance profaneness, to uphold the service and publick Ordinances, to the punishing sin; and let not any self-interests or animosities break your strength, or weaken your hands in acting for God and for Religion. Let me inforce this upon you by a threefold consideration.

I. Consider, from whom you have your power. It is from God, Rom. 13. 1. *For there is no power but of God, &c.* And, Psal. 82. 6. *I have said ye are gods, and all of you are children of the most High*: which expression, as it speaks that tender fatherly regard God hath to good Magistrates, as fathers to their children; so it speaks participation, that they derive all from God, as a son hath all from his father: therefore it is but equitie, that you should employ that power, which you have received from his goodness, to his glory.

II. Consider, from whom you receive enablements, to put this power in execution. God as he gives you the power, so he must enable you to execute it. It was God that gave Solomon wisdom in answer to his prayer, (Solomon knew from whom he must have it) to go in and out before the people, 2 Chron. 1. 10, 12.

III. Consider, to whom you must be accountable for it. It is not onely a power, but a talent and trust God hath put into your hands; and he will one day call you to account for it: then what a terrible

word will that be to a wicked Magistrate, *Luke 16.2.* And he called him, and said unto him: *How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayst be no longer steward.* He that had improved his Talent, appeared chearfully before his Lord to give an account of it; so may you, if by protecting Religion and discountenancing sin you improve your Talent of Authority for your Master's glorie, *Mat. 25.16.*

And for your self (*Mr. Major*) it being your choise to authorize me to be your Remembrancer this day, I shall end all with a particular application to you. Remember you are in a place of opportunity of doing God service: do you, if others neglect it, (though I hope the rest of your Brethren will friendly go along with you, and put the shoulder to the work) stand up for Religion and the service of God; do not look upon your self onely, as entrusted by the Town, for the preserving its peace, and immunities, and priviledges, but as entrusted and empowered by God for the good of the Church, and to keep up Religion in the Town; which that you may chearfully and courageously go through, I shall hint unto you these motives.

*The care of Religion,*

1. Will make your Government prosperous. So God tells *Joshua*, chap. 1. 8. *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayst observe to do according unto all that is written therein: For then thou shalt make thy ways prosperous; and then thou shalt have good success.* So *David* told *Solomon*, *1 Kings 2. 3.* *And keep the charge of the Lord thy God; to walk in his ways, &c. that thou mayst prosper in all that thou dost, and whithersoever thou turnest thy self.* Uphold Religion, it will secure you, *1 Chron. 22. 13.* *Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfill the Statutes and judgements, which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel.* Thus *Hezekiah*, *2 Kings 18. 6, 7.* *For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments which the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth.*

2. It will make your life honourable, and perpetuate a good name to you; which is better then precious oylment. So saith the *Wise-man*, *Prov. 4. 8.* *Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace her.*

3. Your death comfortable. It is a fit meditation for a Magistrate to think of death. *Alexander* had one to be his constant Remembrancer of this: and the *Psalmist* puts the gods of the earth in minde of it, *Psal. 82. 6, 7.* *But ye shall die like men, and fall like on of the Princes.* Now this will sweeten death to reflect upon our faithfulness in



our particular callings. *S. Paul*, when he had finished his course, and kept the faith, could desire to be dissolved. *Moses*, a faithfull Magistrate, zealous for God, and against Idolatrie (with what courage did he cause the Calf to be burned?) the Jews say of him, that he died *ad osculum oris Dei*, at the kisses of Gods mouth, and in divine embraces. How comfortably did *Hezekiah* reflect upon this on his death-bed, *Esay. 38. 3.* And he said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. Thus happie shall you be both in life and death, if you make it your care, what was *Joshua's* here in the Text, that as they did all his days, so all your days the people may serve the Lord.

---

FINIS.

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and  
 wondering how you are getting on. I hope you  
 are well and happy. I have been very busy  
 lately, but I have managed to find some time  
 to write to you. I have been thinking of you  
 very much lately, and wondering how you are  
 getting on. I hope you are well and happy.



# SCRIPTURESEARCH:

A

Dutie very necessarie for these times,  
To ground unstable Christians,  
and to prevent Apostasie:

*Laid down in several Sermons,*

By

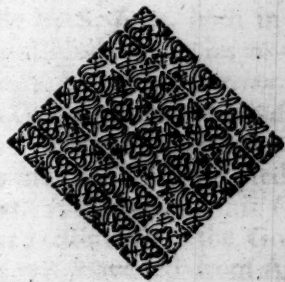
JOHN FROST, B. D. sometimes  
Fellow of S. JOHNS Colledge, and  
late Preacher in Olaves-Hartstreet  
in London.

---

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, Coloss. 3. 16.  
You do err, not knowing the Scriptures, Matth. 22. 29.*

*Adoro Scripturæ plenitudinem, Tertullian.  
Ama sacras Scripturas, & amabit te sapientia. Hieron.*

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CAMBRIDGE:

Printed by John Field, Printer to the University.

Anno Dom. MDCLVII.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

Draw very profitable for their times,  
To ground unstable Christians,  
and to prove themselves

Laid down in several Sermons

By  
JOHN FROST, B. D. sometime  
Fellow of ST. JOHN'S College, and  
late Professor in Oliver-Trust  
in London.

First printed by C. B. at the printing-house of  
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## JOHN 5. 39.

*Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me.*



Here are three things, that may secure Christians from being scandalized at, or seduced by the Errours, and Heresies of these times.

First, That Scripture hath clearly foretold there must be such.

Secondly, That these are but the revivings of those Heresies, which have been in all ages of the Church.

Thirdly, That Scripture affords us plentiful provision of arguments to confute them.

And to instance in that one Heresie, or blasphemie of the *Socinian* at this day, viz. denying the *Divinitie of Christ*. We shall finde it was foretold by the Apostle *S. Peter*, in *2 Pet. 2. 1.* (*denying the Lord that bought them*) and condemned of old by the Fathers, and Councils, in *Samosatenus*, *Photinus*, *Arius*, *Ebion*, *Cerinthus*, and others: and lastly, the Scripture abundantly silenced this horrid blasphemie, especially by *S. John*, both in his Epistles, and Gospel. In his first Epistle, where, by his *πῶλοι αὐτοῦ*, *1 John 2. 18.* his many *Antichrists*, he means *Marcion*, *Ebion*, *Cerinthus*, and such like. And in his Gospel, which in the judgement of *Irenaeus* and divers others of the Ancients, was written on purpose against the blasphemie of *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*, the predecessours and Fathers of our late *Socinians*. And to evince this (To omit the first chapter, which is so clear a testimonie of the God-head of Christ, that *Junius* confesses, he was converted from Atheisme to an acknowledgement of Christ by his reading of it) I need travel no further then the context of this chapter, wherein my present Text lies, where our blessed Saviour disputing against the Jews, he demonstrates himself to be the true *Messiah*, and so consequently true God, by a four fold testimonie.

I. Of *John Baptist*: whom the Jews were obliged to believe, because they had before sent to him, to enquire of Christ, v. 33. *Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness of the truth.*

II. Of his own works and miracles; which evidently argued the arm of omnipotencie to effect them, at verse 36. *The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*

III. Of the Father, at verse 37. *The Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me; viz. that very testimony which the Father gave of the Son, at his being baptized, in Mat. 3. 17. This is my well-beloved Son.*

IV. Of Scripture, here in the Text, which though it be mentioned by our Saviour, as the last, yet is not to be accounted of as the least testimony, as we shall see in the further handling of them. *Search the Scriptures, &c.*

The words therefore, for the better handling of them, we shall consider two waies.

First, *Relatively*, as they stand to the context.

Secondly, *Absolutely*, as considered by themselves.

First, *Relatively*.

Thus considered, they are an argument to prove the God-head, and Office of Christ, which was denied and rejected by the Jews. And this he puts last, that he might vindicate his Doctrine from the suspicion and imputation of novelty: and also, and that more especially, because all the former testimonies lay exposed to the cavils, and exceptions of the Jews: as thus,

Against the testimony of John the objection was obvious, that he was one sent, and suborned by Christ, and therefore his testimony very inconsiderable.

Against his working of miracles, they could easily answer, as sometimes they did, that he cast out devils by Beelzebub.

Against the testimonie of the Father from heaven, it was as easie to cavil, and say, that it was but a phantasie and delusion, a deceptive sensus, or, perhaps, a Satanical revelation.

But, when he appeals to the Scriptures, which the Jews themselves acknowledged, and were even superstitious searchers into, they could have nothing to cavil, or rationally to object: therefore he saith, *Search the Scriptures, &c.* as if he had said, *If, or, although you will not believe any of the former testimonies, yet, sure I am, you cannot deny this.*

And from hence the observation is this,

Observ. *Scripture testimony is the most certain, and infallible ground and evidence of saving truth.*

More certain then Humane testimonie, then Miracles, or Revelations.

And this may be cleared by these reasons.

I. It



I. It is more certain then *Humane testimonie*; for

1. *Scripture testimonie* is *αὐθις*, to be credited, and believed for it self; upon account of that Divine authoritie it brings with it. It was a blinde reverence that *Pythagoras's* scholars gave him; whose *αὐθις ἐπὶ* was sufficient to command their assent to, and entertainment of whatsoever he taught them. This is that we ow to *Scripture*; what it speaks, we must receive as the voice of God: for so it is, if we credit the Apostle, *Hebr. 1. 1. God spake unto us sundrie waies*, &c. No humane testimony can be *αὐθις*: because the best of men are fallible, subject to errour in judgement, or to be perverted by passion, or interest of wrath, or to speak contrarie to truth; therefore I believe no humane writing, but what brings satisfaction to my reason, and suspend my assent till I meet with a rational conviction: but in *Scripture-testimony*, though I meet with no other satisfaction to my reason, then this, that *God hath said it*, I give my assent and belief to it. And thus the Prophets of old used no other arguments to perswade what they delivered, then, *Thus saith the Lord*. Divine testimony is above all exception, and to be believed for it self, not because of the suffrage of the Church, nor the consent and approbation of reason; for this were to exalt Humane testimony above Divine, and the dictates of a fallible reason, above the infallible revelations of God, and to set that in the throne, which God would have us captivate and subdue; as in *2 Cor. 10. 5*. The assent we ow to Humane testimonies upon rational conviction, is an assent of science and demonstration; but the assent I ow to *Scripture testimony*, is an assent of faith, grounded onely upon Divine revelation, which is to be believed, though the testimonie of all the world, and the seeming plausible pretences of reason should contradict it. As the mysterie of the *Trinity*, *Incarnation*, *Resurrection*, and the like, are to reason seeming contradictions, yet to be believed upon the account of *Scripture testimony*; in which the ultimate resolution of our faith ought to be made not into the fallible evidences of reason, or the erring dictates of men. If you finde a *scriptum est*, *Let God be true though all men be liars*, *Rom. 3. 4*.

2. Because of that consent and harmony that is in *Scripture testimony*: no jarring or contradiction in it; but what the Prophets foretold, the Evangelists speak of, is fulfilled. In humane writings how frequently may we observe one contradicting another; and this reason clashing with that? Nay, the same authour through ignorance or forgetfulness inconsistent to himself: but in *Scripture*, there is a full and perfect consent, as all proceeding from the dictate of the same infallible spirit, as in *2 Tim. 3. 16. All Scripture is*

given by inspiration of God, &c. and 2 Pet. 1. 21. *For the prophesie came not in old times by the will of man; but Holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the holy Ghost.* And though there may seem sometimes to be some contradictions, and inconsistencies; yet these arise not from the Scripture it self, but from our shortness, weakness, or ignorance, and the like: therefore we say what our Saviour saith at vers. 46. of this chapter, *Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; and, as Paul speaks in his Apologie for himself, Act. 26. 22. Saying none other things then those, which the Prophets and Moses did say should come.* A sweet consent there is between Christ, Moses, and Paul.

3. Because Scripture was given to this very end to be a certain and infallible ground of truth: for though God, during the infancy of the Church, while it was inclosed in some few families, revealed himself by visions, and communicated his will from hand to hand by tradition, from Adam to Moses, and by extraordinary revelation; yet, when the Church increased, and the people grew more corrupt and inclining to the heathen Idolatry, God gave the law by Moses, and so successively by the Prophets and Apostles, by whom it pleased God to reveal his minde and will to all in writing, both that it might be the better conveyed unto posterity, as we finde it in Psal. 102. 18. *This shall be written for the generation to come: and the more easily secured from corruption.* Had God still conveyed it unto us by the way of tradition: either through the unfaithfulness of mans memory, or his being subject to errour, or affectation of novelty, it had been laid open to a multitude of corruptions; which if (as experience shewes us) scarce prevented by the penning of it, how much less, if it never had been written? And also, that the Church might have an exact standard of faith, & a perfect rule, and an infallible judge of truth, and therefore Ephes. 2. 20. *The Church is said to be built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.* Faith builds surer here then upon the testimony of the Prophets, and Apostles. And this S. Luke tells us expressly was his reason of writing the Gospel, Luke 1. 3, 4. *That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, &c.* And thus more certain then Humane testimony.

II. More certain then miracles: for though it pleased God at first to confirm the truth of the Gospel by miracles to the conviction of the Adversaries, as Nicodemus speaks to our Saviour, in John 3. 2. Yet now, God having compleated the Canon of Scripture, and warned us, not to receive any other doctrine, though an Angel from Heaven should bring it, Galat. 1. 8. and pronounced a wo upon all those, who should add or detract from it, Revelat. 22. 18.

if



if any should bring any doctrine contrary to Scripture, with pretence of confirming it by wonders, and miracles, we ought to reject it as erroneous and Antichristian: and so we see the Apostle makes this one of the badges of Antichrist, *2 Thessal. 2. 9.*

III. More certain then *Revelations.* There is a place, that I have oft thought of, it is in *2 Pet. 1. 18.* A true voice of God from heaven of his son Christ: yet the Apostle tells us, that we may more infallibly finde Christ in *the word of Prophecie*, (what that is, he tells us ver. 20. *προφητεία πατρὸς*) then by extraordinary revelations. Revelations we acknowledge, viz. of the spirit revealing, and clearing up Gospel-truth: and this is that the Apostle pray'd for in behalf of the *Ephesians*, in *Ephes. 1. 16, 17, 18.* *I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of him, &c.* and thus Christ revealed the Scriptures to the disciples, *Luke 24. 45, 46.* that they might understand them, but not that under that pretence of Revelation they should reject, and lay them aside. It is fond, and ungodly to pretend to Revelations, besides or contrary to the Scripture. S Paul would have an *Angel from heaven*, if he brings it, to be *accursed*, *Galat. 1. 8.* and what are they then, who receive them? Again he tells the Church of *Ephesus*, that he had declared unto them *the whole counsel of God*, *Acts 20. 27.* and yet at *Acts 26. 22.* he professes that he said *nothing but what Moses and the Prophets had said should come*: yet this S. Paul was *rapt up into the third heaven*, and there heard *ἀρρητὰ ῥήματα*, *unspeakable words*, in *2 Cor. 12. 4.* There can be no security for our faith from Revelations, unless they be such as bring evidences and assurances that they are from God; for Satan can transform himself into *an angel of light*, *2 Cor. 11. 14.* Now how shall we distinguish Satans delusions from Revelations, but by the Testimony of the Scriptures, by which we are commanded to *try the Spirits*, *1 John 4. 1.* For these Revelations, and Enthusiasmes men pretend unto, are oft as contrary and inconsistent to themselves, as they are all contrary to the truth; and therefore must be tryed by some infallible rule: otherwise we shall constantly lie exposed to delusion, unsetled in judgement, and irresolved as to practise, as not knowing what the next revelation may be, perhaps quite contrary to the former. Wherefore, believe it, they who will not rest upon the Scripture as the foundation of faith, can rest no where. When the Rich man in the Gospel would have had one extraordinary to have been sent from the dead to his brethren: observe what answer *Abraham* gives him, *Luke 16. 29, 30, 31.* *They have Moses, and the Prophets, and if they hear not*

them, neither will they hear, though one come from the dead. If one comes with Revelation, and tells me, It comes from God, he must convince me of the truth of it, or else I may with the same easiness say, It is from Satan: and this conviction can be made no otherwise but by Scripture, which is the most infallible ground of truth.

What the *Pharisees* said of Christ, we may truly say of our late pretenders to *Enthusiasmes* and *Revelations*, We know not whence he is, John 9. 29. They may be from *Rome* (as it is more then probable some of them are:) or whence soever they come, certainly not from God, if they disown the voice of God in the Scriptures. Wherefore my counsel to you shall be that of *S. Paul* to the *Thessalonians*, 2 *Thessal.* 2. 2. Be not soon shaken in minde, nor be troubled; and in 2 *Tim.* 1. 18. Hold fast the form of sound words. And this will be usefull thus:

First, Then make your last appeal to Scriptures in matters of faith. The *Papists* appeal to uncertain traditions, the *Enthusiast* to deluding Revelation; let us to the Scriptures, for this is both the precept of God, and the constant practise of the Scriptures: To the Law and to the Testimonie, *Esay* 8. 20. So our Blessed Saviour always appeals to the Scriptures, as in the business of the Resurrection, *Matth.* 22. 29. And to prove himself the *Messiah*, he appeals to *Moses* and the *Prophets*, *Luke* 24. 26, 27. Thus the Apostles, though acted by the same infallible Spirit, yet always appealed to *Moses*, and the *Prophets*: so did *S. Peter*, *Acts* 2. 25, 31. and from thence did *Apollon* confute the Jews, *Acts* 18. 29. and so *Paul* to prove the resurrection of Christ, in *Acts* 13. 23. So then (my brethren) appeal not to the judgement and testimony of man, what he saith: (as *S. Cyprian* was much delighted with *Tertullian*, that he was wont to say, *Da magistrum*;) nor to the dictates of dark reason: but to the infallible Testimonie of the Scriptures, and attend to Gods voice in them.

Secondly, See here the ingenuous boldness and confidence of truth, that dares appeal to Scripture. Christ was confident of his cause, and therefore declines not the test of Scriptures: Search them, saith he; as if he had said, If they do not testifie of me, then do not acknowledge me. It argues a timorous diffidence and consciousness of men, when they like not to be tried by the word of God; as in the *Papist*, who appeals from the Scripture to traditions; and it speaks the errors of those Revelations, which will not subscribe to be tried here: you may safely reject that doctrine as erroneous, which will not be weighed in the ballance of the Scriptures; or if it be weighed there, proves light and wanting. *Tertullian* of old notes, that *Hereticks*



ticks were *lucifuge Scripturarum*. As *blear-eyes* decline looking upon the sun, so corrupt doctrines the light of the Scriptures.

Thirdly, *Embrace and entertain nothing as saving truth, which will not bear the test of Scripture*. It is one use of Scripture, to be profitable *πρὸς ἐλεγχον*, 2 Tim. 3. 16. to confute, and silence heresie and error: and what-ever the Scripture reproveth is such. Be not imposed upon by the proud imperious dictates of men, nor deluded by the pretences and delusions of Satan, and his instruments; but let this be your rule to try by.

Fourthly, *In all your doubts consult the Scriptures*. So did David in Psal. 119. 24. He made the Testimonies of God his delight, and his counsellours to enform and resolve him: and that, 1. In doubts of the head for reformation: this is one excellency of the Scriptures, to make wise the simple; as in Psal. 119. 7. Scripture, sayes the Apostle, 2 Tim. 3. 16. is profitable to inform the judgement: and by this did David become wiser then his teachers. 2. In doubts of the heart for consolation. That was one end of Gospel-revelation, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope, Rom. 15. 4. And so David found the statutes of God, to be the rejoycing of his heart, Psal. 119. 8. In inward doubts of conscience have recourse to the Scriptures, there thou mayst finde those cordial promises, which will put joy and gladness into thy heart. In thy duty consult the Scripture, which will direct thee; In thy troubles to comfort thee; In thy fears to support thee; In all thy doubts, to comfort and resolve thee.

So much for the words considered Relatively.

Secondly, *Absolutely in themselves*. And so they will fall under a double consideration too.

First, As taken by way of Concession, Indicatively, and so Beza, Camero, Paraus, and others understand them; and so also they speak I. Our Saviours commendation of these Jews, as diligent searchers into Scripture: Or else, II. His discommendation of them and reproof: and that, 1. either of their ignorance, that notwithstanding they did search into Scripture, yet they attained not to the knowledge of him, as the true Messiah: that though they had frequently Bibles in their hands, yet they had not the word of God dwelling in their hearts. Or, 2. of their malice, that, notwithstanding they searched the Scriptures, which did so evidently testify of Christ, yet they maliciously rejected him, and would not come unto him, that they might have life; as in vers. 40.

Secondly, As taken by way of exhortation, Imperatively, speaking a command to all, to search the Scriptures. And I shall take it in this second acception: it being the drift of a great part of this chapter,

chapter, to exhort these Jewes to hear the word of Christ, and *Paras* himself acknowledges, that *uterque sensus est pius & commodus*. And thus taken, there are three things considerable in the words.

First, *The nature of the duty*, expressed in the word *ἐπευρώτε*.

Secondly, *The universality of the dutie*, and that is double.

I. Of the *Persons* engaged in it, expressed indefinitely.

II. Of the *Object*, *τὸς ὑπαφός*: that is all *Scripture*.

Thirdly, *The motive and arguments of the duty*, and they are two.

I. *The benefit of Scripture-search*. *Ye think ye have eternal life in them.*

II. *The object of Scripture-discoverie*: that is Christ, *they testifie of me.*

All which particulars may be reduced to this one general Observation, *That Scripture-search is a duty every Christian ought to be engaged in.* Or thus,

*It is the duty of every Christian to search the Scriptures.*

In the handling of which observation, this method shall be observed.

First, *To shew the importance of the word ἐπευρώτε.*

Secondly, *What searchers of Scripture Christ here points at.*

Thirdly, *The universality of the duty.*

Fourthly, *The grounds of this search.*

Fifthly, *The Application.*

First, *To shew the importance of the word, ἐπευρώτε.* The word signifies *such a search*, as diggers in mines make for gold and silver in the earth, and implies five things.

I. *A valuation and esteem of the Scriptures.* He that digs in a mine for gold evidences his valuation of it, otherwise he would never dig for it: so searching of Scripture speaks an high estimate and prizing of Scripture. Such a searcher of Scripture was David, Psal. 119. 72. who prized the truth of God, more then thousands of gold and silver: and such a searcher was S. Augustine also, who says of himself, *sacra Scriptura tua sunt sancta delicia mea*. And surely, the more a man searches into these mines, the more will he prize and value them, and he that hath the Spirit of God cannot certainly but prize those Scriptures, even because they come from him.

II. *A particular enquiry into Scripture.* He that digs in a mine turns over every particular clod of earth, in which there is probably any gold; lest he should lose any of it: so should Christians in searching the Scriptures particularly examine every Scripture, lest they lose any of that treasure that is hidden in those mines. Adoro

*Scriptura*



*Scriptura plenitudinem*, saith *Tertullian*. There is a fulness of divine treasure in the Scriptures, which is able to make a soul rich in faith and enriched in all knowledge, 1 Cor. 1. 5. And this treasure is not discovered by a perfunctory, general view of Scripture: but by a particular enquiry, and examination into it: for there is not any Scripture, but hath more or less of this treasure in it: every iota of it, saith our Saviour, shall be fulfilled, Matth. 5. 18.

III. *A diligent and frequent perusing of Scripture.* He that digs in a mine makes it his every-days-work, and gives not over, till he hath found the riches and treasure in it. It is not a superficial glance upon Scripture, which will make a discovery of that heavenly treasure to us. Scripture-search must be our every-days-work, &c. indeed, it calls for our daily diligence: thus *David* describes the blessed man to be one, that meditates in the law of God day and night. This searching *S Paul* commends to *Timothy*, Give attendance to reading, 1 Tim. 4. 13. and for which the *Bereans* are commended, Acts 17. 11. and this God commanded the children of Israel, Deut. 6. 6, 7. These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, & shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thine house, &c. There is more golden oare in a clod of earth, then he that digs in a mine discovers at first: so there is a mysteriousness in Scripture, which by a cursory reading of Scripture cannot be discovered. Great mysteries lie *sub cortice litera*, wrapt up in the letter of Scripture, which is discovered by oft reading and examining. A Christian meets with that information, those quicknings, supports, and comforts at one time, which he doth not at another. It is said of *Alphonsus*, that he had read over the Bible ten times with a large comment upon it: and of another, a *Transylvanian* Prince, that he had read over the Bible twenty seven times: & of *Theodosius* the Emperour, that (as *Nicephorus* relates) had a lampe so artificially made constantly supplying it self with oyle, lest any thing might disturbe or interrupt his study of Scripture. And this certainly is the ready way to discover the heavenly treasure, which is hid in Scripture: as we see God by the ministerie of *Philip* revealed Christ to the *Eunuch*, while he was thus diligently reading the Prophet *Isaiah*, as it is in Acts 8. 28.

IIII. *A through search and scrutiny: a digging deep in these mines.* We do not finde mines of Gold upon the surface, and superficies of the earth, but in the bowels of it, & therefore there must be a digging deep: this word in the Text, sometimes in Scripture expresseth Gods searching, as ὁ ἐρευνῶν τὰς καρδίας, Rom. 8. 27. which is so through and exact a search, that not the deepest thought of the heart can escape this searching of God. There are depths in Scripture

Tt

which

Psal. 1. 2.

Nicephor. lib.  
4. cap. 3.A through-  
search, pro-  
fundius ef-  
fodere. Δια-  
σκάψεν αὐ-  
τὸν μὲν ὁ  
κρίστης κα-  
λέν, ἵνα τὸ  
ἐν τῷ βάθει  
καρδίας δι-  
ηκῶν ἐν-  
ρεῖν. So S.  
Chrysost.

which we must dig for, before we can fathom them. The Scripture is a *mystery*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. *a mysterie hid from ages and generations*, Coloss. 1. 26. Here are the τα βάθη το Θεού, 1 Cor. 2. 10. *the deep things of God*: his Nature, his Attributes, his Councils and Decrees; which the Apostle calls ἀνεξερεύνητο, *unsearchable*, Rom. 11. 33. So there are the τα βάθη το Σατανᾶ, Revel. 2. 24. *the depths, methods, wiles, and subtilties of Satan*, which the Scripture discovers, and provides us with armour against them, Ephes. 6. And there are *the depths of our own hearts*. (Psal. 64. 6. *the inward thought, and the heart is deep*): and this Scripture discovers, 1 Cor. 14. 25. But we must dig before we can finde them. The *secrets of Gods Councils* had lain hid in his own breast, had he not discovered them in his word: and Satan doth not lay his plots *above board*, obvious to every eye: and for our own hearts, *they are deceitfull above all things, who can know them*, Jerem. 17. 9. and therefore it must be a deep search to discover them.

V. And lastly, *It signifies labour and pains. Digging in mines is a very tedious laborious work: so is searching these spiritual mines*, Prov. 2. 4. *If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures*. We may observe what S. Peter saies of the Prophets enquiring after salvation, 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11. ἐξερευνησαν, *at verse 10. searched diligently*; and so again at verse 11. ἐπευνόησαν. No gold without digging, no heavenly treasure of knowledge and grace without a diligent and laborious search of Scripture. And that for the first:

Secondly, *What searchers of Scripture Christ here points at.*

There may be much searching to little purpose: and people may take much pains, and no profit may come of it, but sometimes a great deal of mischief.

I shall shew them therefore,

First, *Negatively*,

Secondly, *Positively*.

First, *Negatively*: and here our Saviour means not,

I. *The curious searcher of Scripture*, who reads it more to satisfie his curiositie, then to regulate his life: who in searching neglects that which is obvious, and most necessarie, and is prying into that, which is more difficult and nice: that feeds upon the husks (as I may speak) and pleaseth his phantasie with a few nice *critical* observations of some few passages of Scripture, in the mean time neglecting the more *substantial* food of his soul, the plain truths of the Gospel. One who plaies the *Chymist* with Scripture (which some think is intimated in that expression of Scripture, in 2 Pet. 3. 16. σπεculῶσι) who would get that out of the Scriptures (as those

out



out of natural bodies) what God never put into them: such as with that accursed *Politian* prefers an *Ode* of *Pindar*, before all the *Psalms* of *David*: because there he findes more satisfaction to his nice and vain curiositie. Scripture was never written for this end, to satisfie any mans curiositie.

II. *Not the presumptuous searcher of Scripture*, who would measure all *Scripture-mysteries* by his own reason and apprehension; and, neglecting learning of his Christian dutie, presumes to examine, and thinks to comprehend Gods *secret counsels*: and where the Apostle is put to his *ἄλγεα*! he questions not but he can fathom. He is searching more what God decreed from eternitie, then what himself ought to do in time. It was a good saying of *Seneca*, *Nusquam verecundiores esse debemus, quam cum de Deo agitur*, *Modesty never becomes us better, then when we speak of God*: especially, when we search into his *Actings and Counsels*; which, it is modesty and pietie to admire; boldness and presumption to search too much into: which the Apostle calls, *An intruding into those things he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly minde*, *Coloss. 2. 18.*

III. *Not the discursive searcher*, who searches into Scripture, onely that he may have matter of discourse, not that he may have matter to practise: and that perhaps scoffingly, as that Apostate *Julian*, who said, *ἀνέγνω, ἔγνων, κατέγνω*, that he had read, understood, and contemned the Scripture. This is to read it onely as a historie, or idly, and vainly jesting with the Scriptures: and those searchers have Scripture at their tongues end, but not at their hearts: which our Saviour reproves here in these Jews, who were great searchers of Scriptures, *verse 28.* such who have Bibles in their houses, but not the word of God, *dwelling richly in their hearts*, as the Apostle commands in *Coloss. 3. 16.* *Scripture-discourse* is good, if it be pious, serious, and to build up one another: but *Scripture-practise* is better.

IV. *Not the prejudiced, opinionated searcher of Scripture*, who comes prepossessed with an opinion, and so prejudiced against the truths of the Gospel, and onely searcheth Scripture so far, as will comply with, and Patronize that opinion. Men come possessed with some high notions, and phantasies of their own, and then they wrest the Scripture, and make it stoop to those prepossessions, and this is the reason, why many men finde so little in Scripture: that they finde it very hard to veil and submit their *Speculations and Notions*, to the simplicitie of Gospel-truth.

V. *Not the superstitious searcher of Scripture*, who rests in the o-

Brentius in loc.  
Διὰ τὸ ἐπὶ  
τῇ ψυχῇ ἀνά-  
γνωσκει μόνον  
αὐτοῦ. Chry-  
sost.

*pus operatum*, the work done: such searchers were these Jews, who were wont to number the letters in the old Testament, and could tell you how oft every letter was used: so carefull were they of the Bible, that in an heap of books, they would not suffer another book to lie on the top of a Bible, and if any did by chance let it fall, they were certainly punished for it; so writes *Brentius*: but this they accounted their *righteousness*, and thought to have life and happiness in the bare reading of the Scripture, which was that, for which Christ here blames them; not that they searched, but that they thought to have life by doing it; though they neglected and persecuted Christ, at *verse 40*. *Plus aquo illis tribuistis*, saith *Grotius*. They thought, if they did enlarge their *Phylacteries*, and read the Law so many times over, they were secure of everlasting life.

Chrysost.

**VI.** *Not the careless and irreverent searcher of Scripture*, who sometimes runs over a few chapters of the Bible, (as the Papists mumble over their *Ave-Maries*) without any reverent apprehensions of God the Authour of Scripture, or minding the matter, or mystrie of Scripture. *Ὁυκ εἶπεν, Αναγιώσκετε, ἀλλὰ Ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς.* He does not say, *onely barely Read, and know, but Search the Scriptures.*

**VII.** *Not the carnal secure searcher*, who comes to the reading of the Scriptures with a resolution to go on in his sins, whatsoever the Scripture saith to the contrarie: Let Scripture say what it will, they will do what they list: such as these can read the Promises of God, yet remain unbelieving; his Threatnings, and not tremble; his Judgements, and with a proud *Pharaoh*, grow harder by them; his Commands, yet neglect and disobey them: that as *Noah's* unclean beasts in the Ark *went in unclean, and came out unclean*: so these come to the reading Scripture, and hearing the Word, and remain still secure in sin, and hardened in their iniquitie: as those in *Jeremiah*, 44. 16, 17. that told the Prophet plainly, *As for the word, which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hear it.*

**VIII.** *Not the the profane searcher of Scripture*, who searches the Scripture, onely to finde what may seemingly be wrested to Patronize his licentious, and wicked practises, who makes use of Scripture to cover, and excuse his wickedness: as we read of those *Heathens* in *1 Maccab.* 3. 28. that made diligent search into the book of the Law, that *they might print thereby the likeness of their Idols*: so many search the Scripture, onely to find something, that may favour a corrupt opinion, or a licentious practise. Thus *Julian* the Apostate robbed the Christians of all their goods and estates, Pa-  
tronizing



tronizing that practise by *Matth. 5. 3. Blessed are the poor, &c.* not considering what followed: and *Chemnitius* tell us of one; who reading that place, *Go, and sell all that thou hast, went and sold his Bible too, saying, jam plenè Christi mandato satisfeci.* And thus indeed do the Papists, who never flee to the refuge of *Traditions*, but when the Scriptures fail them. And, truly, there hath been no *erroneous principle*, or *wicked practise*, but hath endeavoured to shrowd it self under *protection* of the Scriptures: and by this means men have been engaged to wrestling Scripture, to *their own*, and *other mens destructions.*

*Chemn. loc. de  
paupertate.*

I X. Not the partial quarrelsome searcher of Scripture, who quarrels with, and casts away all Scripture that makes against him, and admits onely that, which may suit with his corrupt doctrines. Such searchers of Scriptures have Hereticks been in all ages. Thus *Arius* wrested the eighth chapter of the *Proverbs* out of the *Canon*, as speaking of the eternitie of *Increated wisdom*, and so contradicted his blasphemy in denying the *Divinitie* of *Christ*. It is that, which *Irenæus* notes, as the *Genius* of all Hereticks, *Cum ex scripturis redarguuntur*, saith he, *in scripturarum redargutionem convertuntur*, If Scripture reprove their Heresie, they will presently fall out, and quarrel with Scripture. So the *Manichees* of old rejected all the *Old Testament*; and *Cerintus* all the *Gospels*, but *Matthew*; and the *Ebionites* all the *Epistles*; and so the *Antinomians* reject the *Law*, as no part of Scripture, or at leastwise not obliging them. In a word, what *Epiphanius* of old observed of the *Gnosticks*, we may truly observe of the Hereticks of our times: his words are very full, and suite with our present Heresies: When they finde anything in the Scripture, that may make against their opinion, then they say, That comes from the spirit of the world: but if they can finde out any thing, that may but seem in the least to maintain any of their phantasies, then they cry out, This comes from the spirit of truth. So that whereas *S. Paul* saies, All Scripture is given by inspiration, and is profitable, &c. these look onely upon that Scripture as divine, which will suite with their temper and error.

*Irenæus lib. 3.  
cap. 2.*

*Ὅταν εὑρίσκῃ  
κατ' αὐτοῦ  
παραλογισμὸν  
ἐξ αἰνῶντος τοῦ  
κόσμου, ὁμολογῇ  
ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου  
ἐστίν. Ὅταν δὲ  
εὑρίσκῃ ὅτι ἐκ  
τοῦ πνεύματος  
τῆς ἀληθείας  
ἐστίν, τότε  
ἀντιτίθεται τὴν  
ἀποστολικήν  
ἐκκλησίαν.*  
*Epiphanius  
haeres. 26.*

X. Not the calumniating Antichristian (as I may call them) searchers of Scriptures, who search it, onely to oppose it. Such searchers were the Jews of old, who searched the Scriptures, that they might contradict *Christ*; as the *Pharisees* said to *Nicodemus*, *John 7. 52. Search, and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no Prophet.* Such searchers are the *Socinians* at this day, who are, indeed, nice searchers of the Scriptures, but it is to dishonour *Christ*, and to rob him of the glorie of his *Divinitie*, and us of the comfort of his satisfaction: and if they can finde but the least title or *ivm*, that seems

to favour their *blasphemie*, they can crie up that, though in the mean time, they either wholly disown, or else crie down as obscure (as the late *Socinians* do the Gospel of *S. John*) or else pervert and elude all others, that directly make against them. Me thinks, these are such searchers, as *Herod* in *Matth. 2. 4.* who sent the *wisemen* to search diligently for Christ, under a pretence to worship him, but indeed it was to kill him: so these pretend high to honour Christ, but indeed in effect they destroy him, while they invent a few idle niceties to cheat him of his Divinitie. These are such searchers as the devil himself is, who knew how to quote scripture against Christ, as we may read in *Mat. 4.*

XI. And lastly, *Not the contentious searcher of Scripture*, who searches it onely to finde out, and fill the world with a company of idle questions, impertinent and unnecessary controversies. Such as these the Apostle describes *1 Tim. 6. 4, 5.* that they are proud, dotting about questions, and strifes of words, whereof cometh envie, strife, railing, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt mindes, &c. and from these the Apostle would have *Timothy* to withdraw. And these are none of the searchers which our Saviour here points at: and having viewed these, we are now to shew,

Secondly, *Positively, What kinde of searchers of Scriptures our Saviour would have.*

And they are these.

I. *The humble searcher*: one who comes to the search of Scripture in a real sence of his own ignorance; not puffed up with high thoughts, and conceits of his own knowledge. Pride & self-conceit are great obstructions to any knowledge, but most to a Scripture-knowledge. If any man thinks he knows any thing, he knows nothing, as he ought to know, *1 Cor. 8. 2.* Humilitie is most becoming a Christian in the search of Scripture, if he shall consider,

1. The depth of Scripture-mysteries compared with the straightness and shallowness of our understandings. In Scripture are revealed the deep things of God, the mysterie of the kingdom, which the natural man receiveth not, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* Even in the search of the nature of earthly things (where yet reason is in its proper sphere) how short and dark is it? The nature of the meanest creature puzzles, and puts to a *non plus*: not the least, and most contemptible creature, but may teach us a modest humility, much more in the search of these great mysteries. *Dic mihi formam lapidis*, so *Scaliger* to *Cardan*: we are puzzled in the forms of created, material compound Beings, and shall we proudly intrude into Gospel-mysteries, mysteries hid from ages and generations: we are all dark-

fighred



fighted in *natural things*, but stark blinde in *spiritual mysteries*.

2. God communicates himself in the search of Scripture onely to the humble: he fills these *emptie vessels*. *Eliab* bids the widow get *emptie vessels*, that her *oyl might be multiplied*, 2 Kings 4.3. We must get vessels *emptie of pride and self-conceit*, if we would have our spiritual knowledge encreased, for *with the lowly is wisdom*, Prov. 11: 2. Observe we the promise in *Psal. 25.9. He will teach the humble*: and what our Saviour saith, *Mat. 11.25. Thou hast revealed these things unto babes*: that is, in their own opinion. Believe it for true, that, *to know your ignorance is a good step to true and saving knowledge*.

3. Without this *humilitie* we cannot entertain, and embrace Gospel-truth. Men puffed up with a proud conceit of their own knowledge have often proved greatest enemies unto the Gospel: hence it seemed at first to the *Greeks foolishness*, 1 Cor. 1. 23. It seemed absurd to their reason to expect life and salvation by a crucified Saviour. *Pauls* preaching of the Gospel seemed but babling to the *Epicurean*, and *Stoick Philosophers at Athens*, Acts 17.18. And they were the *Scribes and Pharisees*, men high and proud in their own donceits, which reject our Saviours person and doctrine. It is hard for men not to be puffed up with pride, and exalted above measure. *S. Paul* himself was in danger of it. *Galen* rejected the doctrine and profession of Christianity, because he could not meet with *Mathematical demonstrations* to prove every thing in it, as he did in other sciences. It is the grace of *humilitie* makes men to submit to the *simplicitie of the Gospel*: Receive with meekness the ingrafted word, James 1. 21. and it so received will help to save the soul.

II. The reverent trembling searcher, that, when he reads the Scripture, does it with an *holy awe and reverence of that God*, whose word it is, and of those *mysteries of life and salvation by Christ*, which it discovers. This is the man God looks at: *Isaiah 66.2. To him will I look that trembleth at my word*. One that fears, lest by his own phantasies and ignorance he may misinterpret Scripture, or wrest it to his own, or other mens *destructions*. This holy fear becomes especially the Ministers of the Gospel in their search of Scripture, that they do not, as *Spiders*, suck poison out of those flowers to the poisoning, and infecting of others. This does *S. Paul* urge upon *Timothy*, 1 Tim. 4.16. Take heed unto thy self, and thy doctrine; that thou mayst save both thy self and others: intimating, that if he did not take heed, he might destroy both himself and others. Ye know how the *Beth-shemites* fared for their irreverent gazing into the Ark,

Ark, 1 Sam. 6.19. and so thou hast cause to fear, who doest with an irreverent boldness search into Scripture, without any awfull thoughts of the Majestie, and Mysteries of God. Moses was to pull off the shoes off his feet, when he conversed with God, and heard his voice. When thou readest Scripture, thou hast God speaking unto thee; for it is *his voice*, Heb. 1. 1. and therefore come with reverent affections. What the Apostle saies of speaking, 1 Pet. 4. 11. *If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God*; the same say I of searching into the Scriptures, and that bespeaks reverence.

III. *The orderly searcher.* Order and method is great in the acquiring of all knowledge: *method* facilitates the *understanding*, and strengthens the *memorie*; it makes things more *perspicuous*, and so more easie to be understood, and more strongly and certainly retained. That knowledge must needs be confused, which is gotten by *amethodical* studie. *Method* demonstrates the dependance of one thing upon another, and so makes all easie and facile. So that in *search of Scripture* we should not pick here and there a chapter, or verse, but read in order; first the *easiest*, and then the more *difficult*: for *pascimur apertis, exercemur obscuris*. Milk is easiest for nourishment, and *strong meat* to exercise our senses with. First therefore those, that may *build us up in the faith*, as the Gospels and Epistles, then what may exercise our parts and learning. I take it a preposterous way of *Scripture-search*, which many take, to search first into the Prophecies, Revelations; and the darker places of Scripture, and neglect the Epistles of the Apostles, and other easier places. It is in *Scripture-search*, as in all other sciences, there are some more easie, and obvious *principles*, and these first to be learned, before we go to deductions and the like. First, let us go where the *lamb* may wade, and then where the *Elephant* may swim.

IV. *The judicious searcher*, that reads with judgement and understanding. As Philip said to the *Eunuch*, when he was reading the Prophet *Isaiah*, Acts 8.30. So say I to every searcher of Scripture, *Understandest thou what thou readeest*? No profit by searching without understanding: therefore children and mad-men are no competent searchers of Scripture; there is required an act of judgement and discretion. Or if, as the *Eunuch*, thou understandest not, then consult with those that do. Read still in obedience to God's command, (nay, let this double thy endevours) but remember to consult with the *Philips*, that is, the Ministers of the word.

V. *The thankfull searcher*, who, when he reads the Scriptures, me-



meditates of and thankfully acknowledges the goodness of God, in giving and revealing to him the Scriptures. Christ himself esteemed this thank-worthy, in Matth. 11. 25. *I thank thee, O Father of heaven, &c.* and how much more should we do it in regard of our selves? if we shall but consider,

1. What a great priviledge it is to a person or nation, to have the Scriptures, the word of God entrusted with them. This was the great priviledge of the Jews, which the Apostle takes notice of as their *greatest advantage above the Gentiles*, Rom. 3. 1, 2. *ἐμπιστεύσαντες*: He made them *Trustees* of his word and promises. And the same would the Psalmist have observed with thankfulness, *Psalms* 147. 19.

2 How this is the onely light, which can lead us to heaven. This is the *cloud*, which will lead you through the wilderness unto *Canaan*: the light of nature is but *a groping* after God, *Acts* 17. For though *the invisible things of God are clearly seen by the things that are made*, as we have it, *Rom.* 1. 20. yet cannot the knowledge by nature at all discover Christ: without which knowledge no salvation, if you credit our Saviour himself, *John* 17. 3. The Scripture is our onely star to lead us unto Christ. The light of nature may lead men to hell and leave them there inexcusable, but the light of Scripture can onely light us to heaven: *In them you think you have eternal life*, as our Saviour speaks here.

3 If you consider seriously, How many thousands in the world sit in darkness, left to the natural blindness of their corrupt hearts: How many are in *Egypt* while we are in *Goshen*, *a land of light*. Looke abroad into the world, and see, what palpable darkness is the greatest part of it overclouded with: and what fond guides do the most follow: The *Mahumetan* regulated and guided by a ridiculous *Alcoran*: the *Papists* enslaved to fond and uncertain Traditions: the *Jew* being left to his own hardness, refusing the Gospel, following a few Curious *Rabbines*: and many thousands, *who never heard of the sound of the Gospel*, but are even *without God in the world, having their understandings darkened*, as it is *Ephes.* 4. 18. while we enjoy the *clear light* of the glorious Gospel, *to guide our feet into the waies of peace*. Observe we what God says to the *Israelites*, *Deut.* 4. 8. *What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgements so righteous, &c.* These make a nation great: so may we say, and so oft as we read, or hear the word of God, should thankfully acknowledge it.

VI. *The Practical searcher*, who searcheth the Scripture: that he may thereby *regulate his life*, and *order his conversation aright*. It is one end why God hath given the Scriptures unto us, *Psal.* 119.

9. It is as a rule to walk by: Galat. 6. 16. *As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them:* such should all searchers of Scripture be: for

1. Otherwise Scripture-search will be in vain: it will be no otherwise profitable to us to know Scripture, if we do not live by it, then to aggravate our sin, *1am. 4.* and to encrease our condemnation, that we shall have *double stripes*, Luk. 12. 47. It is better to be mere Ideots and Dunces in Scripture, then not to live according to them; better had we never search for these heavenly treasures, and spiritual pearls, then when we have found them to trample them under our feet. We should search Scripture for that end, for which God gave it: and that the Apostle tells us, *2 Tim. 3. 17,* is *that we might be thoroughly furnished unto every good work.* He truly searches the Scripture, who resolves, what ever command he meets with, though never so contrary to his lust, that he will obey it: therefore did the Prophet *David meditate in the law of God*, that he might make it *a light unto his feet*, Psal. 119. 105.

2. No other searchers are like to finde the hidden treasures of Scripture. God hath engaged to reveale himself to such as these, *Joh. 7. 16, 17.* *If any one will do his will he shall know,* &c. and *David* gives this as an account of his great knowledge, *Psal. 119. 98.* Nothing improves knowledge more then a suitable practise; & the true reason, why men finde no more in the searching of Scripture, is, because they read it more out of curiosity then of Conscience. It is grace in the heart, and obedience in the life, that makes men fruitful in Scripture-knowledge: Consider that Emphatical place in *2 Pet. 1. 5, 6.* where the Apostle exhorts to a diligent acquiring, and practising of several graces, and gives the reason of it at ver. 8. *For if these things be in you, you shall not be barren, nor unfruitfull in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The *Turke* writes upon his *Alcoran*, *Let none read this book, but he that is holy:* None are fit to be searchers of Scripture, but who either are or at least resolve to be holy.

3. Every ungodly and wicked man is really prejudiced against Scripture-light, and knowledge. *Joh. 3. 19.* *Light is come into the world, and men love darkness.* So many corruptions and lusts have all wicked men reigning in their hearts: so many real bolts and bars they have against the true Scripture-knowledge: it is irksome and troublesome to them to entertain that truth which will discover their sins, and so break and disturb the security they have been in a long time: and therefore they rather with those in *Job* desire God to depart from them. As the Philosopher observes ἀνθρώποις καὶ τὰ ἐν σὺνείδεισιν: men desire a doctrine suitable to their corruptions: ( and this



this is the reason of that variety of doctrines and religions now in the world) which the doctrine of the Scripture will not in the least comply with: and that is the true cause of mens averſeness from an effectual entertainment of the Gospel: and of their shutting eyes against Scripture-light and convictions. The Philosopher gives this as the reason, why young men are not fit scholars in morality: *Διὰ τὸ πάθος*: because they are guided by lust and passion; and the Apostle gives the same reason, why some are learning and never come to the knowledge of the truth, because they are such as are led about by diverse lusts, in 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. That soul, which is resolved to give up it self unto obedience of the Scripture, is that which will readily embrace the doctrine of Scripture: because inwardly compliant with, and conforming to the will of God. Whereas a wicked man, when he searches Scripture, he hath something within him, that rises up against the truths of God: a carnal minde within him, that is enmity to God, which disputes the commands and quarrels with the truths of God. "Α μὴ δάσκειν ποτεῖν, ποτεῖντες μὴ δάσκειν, saith the Heathen, that is, What we learn that we may do, while we do it, we further learn it. As knowledge must regulate our practise: so our practise will promote and increase our knowledge of the Scripture.

VII. The praying searcher, that interchangeably reads and prays. This the Wise-man directs unto, Prov. 2. 4, 5. *If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her, as for hid treasures: then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, &c.* This is an excellent way sure: for, as the Scriptures will afford us matter for our prayer, so prayer will lead us into the knowledge of the Scriptures. Searching scripture will enflame our zeal in prayer, and prayer will promote and facilitate our study of Scripture. Moses when the Ark set forward, and when it rested again, prayed devoutly, as we may read, Numb. 10. 35, 36. so when you set upon reading of the Scripture, and when you rest from it, do it with prayer. S. Austin hath two remarkable stories to this purpose; One of Antonius the Hermite, who was so *δυσήλεκτος*, that he could, though he knew not one letter, fully understand, and by heart repeat the whole Bible: the other, of a certain servant converted from Heathenisme to Christianity: *Qui triduanis precibus obtinuit, ut codicem oblatum stupentibus qui aderant, legendo percurreret: who by praying three daies obtain'd of God that he read through the Bible, when offered him, to the amazement of them that were present.* This was it the Apostle directs unto: *If any want wisdom, let him ask it of God,* Jam. 1. 5. and David practised, Psal. 119. 18. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.* God infuseth not knowledge into us by miracles immediately, as into the Apostles, but by the use of

August. pra-  
fat. ad lib. de  
Doct. Christi.]

means: compare *Prov.* 2. 4, 6. The freeness of God in giving does not dismiss us from endeavouring: for though faith is said to be *the gift of God*, *Ephes.* 2. 8. yet it is said also *faith comes by preaching*, *Rom.* 10. 17. Prayer is the way to come by the spirit, which discovers the depths, and treasures of the Scriptures: *Luke* 11. 13. *Your heavenly father will give the holy spirit to them that ask him.* This is the onely key to unlock those rich cabinets, wherein are contained those precious jewels of saving truth and knowledge.

VIII. *The believing searcher:* and indeed without the eye of faith we are like to do little good in searching: the Gospel is *an hidden thing* saith the Apostle *to them that perish*, *2 Cor.* 4. 3. & who those are you may see at *vers.* 4. those *who believe not.* They, who come not with faith, may search into the letter, and historie of Scripture, but not into the mystery and spirit of Scripture. The Apostle tells us, the Jews had a *veil upon their hearts*, and *their minds were blinded*, while Moses was read, *2 Cor.* 3. 14, 15. viz. the veil of unbelief, that they could not see through those ceremonies, or those clearer prophecies, which in the old Testament were made of Christ. So there is still a veil of unbelief upon every natural mans heart, *which veil is done away in Christ*, *ver.* 14. viz. by faith in him, then God reveales himself to such. God, when he manifested himself to Moses put him into a rock, *Exod.* 33. 22. and this rock resembled Christ: God discovers himself, and his minde to those who are in Christ by faith. *We have the minde of Christ*, saith the Apostle, *1 Cor.* 2. 16. that is, *we believers.* *Scriptura peculiaris est filiorum Dei schola*, saith Calvin, They are the onely good scholars, who read the Scriptures with faith. The Scriptures are able to make perfect the man of God, in *2 Tim.* 3. 17. *The man of God: Nihil hic faciet filius huius seculi*, saith Musculus. A carnal heart will hardly be a proficient here.

IX. *The Christian searcher:* He who searcheth Scripture that thereby he may come to know and enjoy Christ, and indeed without this all is in vain. The most curious, exact, learned searcher doth but search them to his own destruction, if he doth not hereby come to a saving knowledge of Christ. *They testifie of me*, saith Christ, and therefore (or to this end) that you may know me, whom they testifie of, *Search.* In searching the Scriptures, search, that you may know me. And this brancheth it self into two parts.

*First, No knowledge of Christ without the Scriptures.* *The things that are seen may lead us to the invisible things of God:* that is, his eternal God-head and power, as it is in *Rom.* 1. 20. but these lead us not to the knowledge of Christ.

*Secondly,*



Secondly, *The whole Scripture gives us a full testimony and discoverie of Christ*: more darkly in the *Old*, more expressly in the *New Testament*. That testifies of Christ to come, this of Christ as already come: this is but the fulfilling of that. Our Saviour here sends these to the *Old Testament*, in which they were exactly versed, so as *Josephus* tells us, they could tell you any word in it, as readily as their own name. All the Prophets spake of Christ, as Peter tells the Jews, *Acts* 10.43. Three ways the Scriptures of the *Old Testament* speak of Christ, which I rather mention, because it is the chief interest of the Text, as also to strengthen our faith in the true Messiah against the Jews: and hereby to admonish us in reading and searching them to look after Christ, and the knowledge of him.

*Josephus cont.  
Appon. l. 2.*

I. By promises: as the promised seed to Adam, *Gen.* 3. to Abraham, *Gen.* 15. to Isaac, *Gen.* 26. to Jacob, *Gen.* 28. to the tribe of Judah, *Gen.* 49. and all these are great assurances to our faith.

II. By plain prophecies. Christ is Jacobs Shiloh, in *Gen.* 49.10. Balaams star coming out of Jacob, *Numb.* 24. 17. Isaiahs Immanuel, *Isaiah* 7. 14. Daniels man, standing before the Ancient of daies, *Dan.* 7. 13. Feremiahs the Lord our righteousness, *Jerem.* 23. 6. Zechariahs branch, *Zech.* 3. 8. and Malachies Sun, *Mal.* 4. 2. And this in general: it would be infinite to descend to particulars: not a circumstance of his birth, life, or death, but was foretold by some of the Prophets. The place of his birth, *Micah.* 5. 2. the manner of his conception, *Isai.* 7.14. his humilitie and povertie of life, *Zech.* 9. his death, *Isai.* 53. 7. Judas's betraying and selling him for thirtie pieces of silver, *Zech.* 11.12,13. his scourging, *Isai.* 53. 5. his being spit upon, *Isai.* 50. 6. his crucifying among thieves, *Isai.* 53. 12. and after death his resurrection and ascension, *Psal.* 110. and *Hosea* 13. 14.

III. In types and shadows. The whole Ceremonies were nothing else but shadows: Christ the substance. Thus was Christs passion typified by the Passover, by the Brazen serpent lifted upon a pole, *John* 3. 14. His taking away our sins by his death typified by the scape goat, *Levit.* 16. 10, 21. His lying three days in the grave, and his resurrection, typified in *Fonah*, chap. 1. The pillar of cloud, and of fire, the Red-sea, Manna, Rock, all types of Christ; of which latter, the Apostle speaks expressly, that rock was Christ, *1 Cor.* 10. 4. I have mentioned these, to lay an engagement upon you in search of Scripture, especially to look after Christ: he is the scope, and substance, and center of all Scripture. Dost thou read the Ceremonies of the old Law? look upon them as shadows, of which Christ is the bodie and substance. Dost thou read the Promises?

look upon them all, as *Yea and Amen in Christ*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. Doeſt thou read the *Sacraments*? eye *Chriſt* as the thing ſealed by them. Doeſt thou ſearch the *Law*? Read it as thy *ſchool-maſter* to bring thee unto him, *Galat. 3. 24.* The *Propheſies*? *Chriſt* the fulfilling of them. Thus all the *lines and draughts* of Scripture meet in this centre: all Scripture *light* centres in *this Sun of Righteouſneſs*, without which, ſearch Scripture never ſo much, you are ſtill in the *dark*, if it be not your *ſtar* to lead you unto *Chriſt*.

And ſo much of the ſecond thing, *What ſearchers of Scripture Chriſt here points at.*

I come now to the third General,  
*The univerſality of the duty.*

And this is two fold, } I. The ſubject, *All men.*  
                                      } II. The object, *All the Scriptures.*

I. *The univerſality of the ſubject, All men*; none being exempted from this dutie. *Ministers of the Goſpel* are eſpecially concerned in this, who are to diſpence the *Myſteries* of ſalvation unto others. It is an old and true ſaying, ſealed by the experience of all ages, that *Bonus textuarius eſt bonus Theologus*; *A good Scripturiſt is a good Divine*: and therefore does the Apoſtle give this eſpecially in charge to *Timothy*, *Till I come, give attendance to reading*, in 1 Tim. 4. 13. But, not onely theſe, *every Chriſtian* is concerned in this duty, if upon no other conſiderations, then theſe in the Text; they are abundantly evincing. Every Chriſtian is concerned in *eternal life*: Therefore, ought to ſtudie Scripture, which directs him the way thither; and it is therefore called *the word of life*, Philip. 2. 16. and, *the Goſpel of our ſalvation*, Ephes. 1. 13. As a traveller, that is ignorant of his way, will be oft conſulting his Maps, examining, and enquiring which is the way: we are all naturally ignorant of the true way to life, and therefore we muſt oft ſearch *Scriptures*, which are the Map of that *Jeruſalem*, which is above, directing us the way thither. So *Chriſt* is the *onely way*, out of of whom, no man can come thither, *John 14. 6.* And then, the *knowledge of Chriſt* is every Chriſtians *intereſt and concernment*. Hence are thoſe frequent exhortations of Scripture to Chriſtians, *To grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. And this we come to by Scripture; *They teſtifie of me*, ſaith our Saviour in the Text. Beſides theſe, all are engaged to the ſearch of the Scriptures upon theſe accounts.

I. *In obedience to Divine command.* God exempts none from this dutie, *Deut. 6. 6, 7, 8.* but ſends all *to the law and teſtimony*, *Iſai. 8. 20.* and it is the Apoſtles frequent command, *Coloſſ. 3. 16.* and his charge is very ſhort, 1 Theſſ. 5. 27. and what are all the *Elo-*  
*giums*



giums and commendations of those who conscientiously perform this duty, but so many *motives* and *arguments* for us to do it? Such are that character of a *godly man*, *Psal.* 1. 3. that *he meditates in the law of God both day and night*: that commendation of the *Be-reans*, who *searched the Scriptures*, *Acts* 17. 11. and that of *S. Peter* to whom he wrote, telling them, that *they did well in taking heed to that sure word of prophesie*, *2 Pet.* 1. 19. Therefore the neglect of this searching Scripture is a disobedience to a Divine command.

2. *In conformitie to the practise of the Saints in all ages.* *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, ordinary tent-makers, so well skilled in the Scriptures, that they were able to instruct an eloquent *Apollos*, *Acts* 18. 24, 25, 26. It spoke Gods approbation of the *Eunuchs* searching the Scriptures, when he sent *Philip* to him, *Acts* 8. 28. *Timothy* was an apt scholar in this school, *2 Tim.* 3. 15. instructed, questionless, not by his father (who was a *Greek*) but by his grand-mother *Lois*, and his mother *Eunice*, whose faith the Apostle highly commends, *2 Tim.* 1. 5. whence it is obvious to collect the industrie of Godly women in those times, in searching *themselves*, and instructing *their children* in the Scriptures: a good copie for others to write after. Amongst the Jews it was accounted a crime to have a family without a Bible; I wish it were so now.

3. *Thereby to promote the interest, and advantage of their own souls.* Hereby (*Christians*) you may be inabled to *try the Spirits*, to discern truth from falsehood, and not so easily to be imposed upon, or tossed about with every wind of doctrine: hereby to *prove all things*, that you may hold fast that which is good, *1 Thessal.* 5. 21. Hereby you may be built up in the holy faith, strengthened in the truth, quickened in holiness, and, in a word, through faith be brought unto salvation, as is intimated in that of our Saviour, *John* 20. 31. *These things are written that you might believe, and that believing you might have life.* But a little more particularly, these are concerned in the search of Scripture.

1. *Those that are ignorant to be informed, and inlightned.* This is one use of Scripture to be profitable, *we's didaxia*, for instruction, *2 Tim.* 3. 16. and the Apostle elsewhere tells us, that whatsoever was written afore was written for our learning, *Rom.* 15. 4. and this is it for which *David* so much extols the *Law* and *word of God* (both in *Psal.* 19. and 119.) so frequently; confessing that by these commandments he was made *wiser then his enemies*, verse 98. that he had *more understanding then his teachers*, verse 99. and so in many other particulars.

2. *The more learned and knowing Christians, to be quickened and established.*

*stablished.* None are so learned, but may be scholars in the school of Christ: none but may be further informed, or by oft searching the Scripture be more strengthened and confirmed. *Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby,* saith the Apostle, 1 Pet. 2.2. *Grow in grace, and grow in knowledge,* 2 Pet. 3.18. The word of God is not only seed to beget Christians, but milk to strengthen and nourish them. The want of the word is compared to a famine, Amos 8. 11. In a famine, when men have not a daily and constant supply of bread, the strength and activity of their bodies decay and languish: so will it be in the soul, without a daily supply of this Manna, this bread which comes down from heaven, the Scriptures or word of God, there will be a decay in knowledge, and a languishing in our graces. The most knowing Christian must search the Scripture, to have his affections to Gospel-mysteries quickened and enflamed, his faith established, and his memorie quickened: what the Apostle saith of his writing to the Philippians, Phil. 3. 1. *To write the same things for you it is safe:* and no less safe for the most knowing Christian still to be reading the same things again and again.

3. *Those that are distressed Christians to be comforted.* It was one end of writing the Scripture, that we through patience of the Scripture might have hope, Rom. 15.4. and therefore must be one end of our searching them: and David by experience found this true in Psal. 19.8. where he saies, *The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:* and very frequently in Psal. 119. as that *the word was his comfort in his affliction,* verse 50. that *Gods statutes were his songs in the house of his pilgrimage,* verse 54. that *the law was his delight,* verse 92. and so in many other places, much to the same effect. And, indeed, here may we meet with supporting comforts, suitable to every condition. Here are examples of the patience, and comforts of the Saints in the like cases. Art thou in want and poverty? Consider Daniel preferring his course fare of bread, and water before the kings portion, Dan. 1. Art thou under reproach, and affliction for Christ? Consider the Apostles rejoicing, that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ, Acts 5.4. Art thou called to the fiery trial? Consider the three children untouched in the midst of the furnace. Art thou despoiled of goods and children? Consider Job upon the dunghil. S. Chrysostom writing to Cyriacus the Bishop, then in banishment, tells him how he was comforted in the like case; Εἰ μὲν θέλειται ἡ Βασιλεία ἐξοείσθαι, ἐξοείσθαι με· ὅτι Κυεῖν ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πᾶν ὅμιλον αὐτοῦ, &c. *If the Emperess (saith he) will banish me, let her; my comfort is, the earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof. If she will saw me asunder, she may: I fare no worse then the Prophet Isaiah. If she will cast me into the sea: I have the the example of Jonah. If she will*



will cast me into the fierie furnace, so were the three children cast: If she will cast me to wilde beasts, so was Daniel cast into the den of lions, &c. Besides all these encouraging examples, how many gracious promises are there upon record, which are full breasts of consolation, as it is in *Isai. 66. 11.* a metaphor (saith *A Lapid* upon that place) taken from crying children, who are quieted by the breast: so are perplexed Consciences by the promises. I have read of a woman, that was much disquieted in conscience, even to despair, endeavouring to be her own executioner, but was comforted with that place, *Isai. 57. 15.* For thus saith the high and loftie one, that inhabiteth eternitie, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of an humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. And of another man, who being ready to dye, Lord, saith he, I challenge thee by that promise, *Matth. 11. 28.* Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are hea-vie laden, and I will give you rest; and so was comforted. Here is a word of season to him that is weary, as in *Isai. 50. 4.*

4. The tempted Christian, for strength against the onsets of Satan. Here a Christian may meet with that armour by, which he may quench the fierie darts of Satan, *Ephes. 6. 17:* David overcame Goliath with a stone out of the brook: and Christ Satan (not by his omnipotencie, as he might, but) by a *Scriptum est, It is written.* If Satan assault thee, this spiritual Goliath, take one stone out of this brook, a plain text of Scripture; thou mayst conquer, and triumph over him. He enters the lists disarmed, that is ignorant of the Scriptures; *χρηὶς ὁπλων εἰς πλεονεξίαν ἐαδίζομεν*, saith Chrysostom. Doth Satan set upon thee by force? Here is the spiritual panoply, the whole armour of God; especially the sword of the Spirit of which we may say (as he of the sword of Goliath) *There is none like it.* Or doth he more cunningly endeavour to circumvent thee by his wiles, and subtleties? here thou mayst be so instructed, that thou shalt not (as the Apostle saith) be ignorant of his devices, *2 Cor. 2. 11.* that so you may easily countermine his plots. As he tempts to sin, perhaps upon that suggestion, that *It is a little one:* but Scripture will tell thee, *Rom. 6. 23.* The wages of sin (that is, of every sin, and the least) is death. He bids thee, *Do what others do:* but the Scripture saith, *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil,* *Exod. 23. 2.* He bids, *Put off thy repentance;* thou mayst repent afterward: but the Scripture saith, *Esau found no place for repentance afterward,* although he sought it with tears. He tells you, *You shall gain by sin:* but the Scripture tells you, that this seeming gain will prove a real loss, *Matth. 16. 26.* Or, that, these sins are full of pleasure; but the Scripture tells you, that those pleasures of sin are but for a season, in *Heb. 11. 25.*

Chrysost. Hom.  
in Coloss.

and the punishment is eternal, *Mat. 25.46.* And so much of the universalitie of the subject, that it concerns all to search the Scriptures.

I I. I come to the *universalitie of the object*, expressed indefinitely, τὰς γραφάς, *the Scriptures*; as well the Law, as the Gospel; as well the old Testament, as the New. The *Manichees* of old, and many of later daies, have refused the search of the old Testament, as not usefull, or necessarie to Christians, under a *Gospel dispensation*. I shall therefore endeavour at this time to demonstrate unto you the dutie of a *general and universal search*, which lies upon all Christians. If we had nothing, but this text of Scripture to confirm it, it were unanswerable: our Saviour here speaking of the old Testament, as is evident from the persons to whom he directs this command, who were the Jews, enemies to the Gospel; but great admirers of the old Testament, and diligent searchers into it. Now observe the argument, *In them ye think ye have eternal life, therefore, profitable: and they testifie of me, therefore, necessarie*: and all this is spoken ἐγκωμιαστικῶς, *by way of commendation* to the Jews, and therefore much more to Christians; as *S. Chrysostom* observeth in his fourteenth homilie on the Gospel of *S. John*, ὁ κύριος, τὸν Ἰουδαίους παρακαλῶν τὰς γραφὰς ἐρευνᾶν, ὅτι μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς εἰς ζήτησιν ἐναγίζετο, *The Lord, exhorting the Jews to the search of the Scriptures, does much more press us Christians thereunto, even by their example*. But there are many other Scriptures, which demonstrate unto us the usefulness of the Scriptures of the old Testament, as *Rom. 15. 4.* ὅσα περ ἐγράφη, *What soever was written afore, was written for our comfort and instruction*; that is, what was written by the Prophets was written for the comfort and instruction of us Christians. And again, *Eph. 2. 20.* You see the faith of the Christian Church is built upon the foundation of the doctrine & writings, as well of the Prophets, as of the Apostles, both leading us to Christ, as to *that onely foundation*, *1 Cor. 3. 11.* viz. *of salvation*. Again, *2 Pet. 1. 19.* *To which* (that is, *that sure word of prophesie*) *you do well that you take heed*: even that which was written before, by the Prophets, is as a light to direct you. And therefore observe, how *Abraham* dispatcheth the *Gluttons* brethren to *Moses* and *the Prophets*, *Luke 16. 29.* whence it is obvious to collect, that the writings of *Moses*, & *the Prophets* are to be read, heard, and assented to by Christians under the Gospel. To all which we may add that full place of our Saviour, *Matth. 5. 17. 19.* *I come not to destroy the Law or the Prophets, &c.* If Christ did not dissolve them then certainly Christians must not neglect to search them: but Christ was so far from dissolving, that he did fulfill them, and that in his doctrine, which was suitable, and conformable to that of the Law and the Prophets; in his life by obedience, exactly answering



ing the commands of *the law*, and in his sufferings to what *the law* threatened, and the Prophets had foretold. The reasons then, why *Christians* are to search both, are these.

I. Because *both are the voice of God to us*. The Apostle tells us expressly that the same God, who at divers times, and in divers ways spake to the fathers, hath in these last daies spoken also unto us, Heb. 1. 1. both are by divine inspiration, 2 Tim. 3. 16. All Scripture is given: not this, or that: and 2 Pet. 1. 21. The propheties of old time, &c. what they wrote, they were God's Amanuenses, and wrote not their private phantasies, but the dictates of the Spirit of God. Holy men they were of God, and therefore their authority unquestionable and immutable, their value and use great and excellent. To the moral law we are all obliged, as a rule of our obedience, and though not to the observance of the ceremonial, yet to the knowledge and meditation of it, as very usefull, both to acquaint us with the variety of God's dispensations, and by the comparing of those shadows and types with Christ, the bodie and substance, they may be evidences of Christ already exhibited, and come in the flesh. The consulting all Scripture is both our interest, and duty, as having God the authour of it.

II. The harmony, and identitie of Scripture doctrine both in the Old, and New Testament. The same for substance, though different in degrees: the same object of faith, viz. Christ, to whom all the Prophets witnessed, Acts. 10. 43. otherwise those under that dispensation had been in a lost, undone condition: for Acts. 4. 12. There is no other name given under heaven, whereby men may be saved. The Prophets represent Christ in his person, as God and Man, Isai. 7. 14. In his offices, as a Prophet, Isai. 42. 1, 2, 3. as a Priest Psal. 110. 4. as a King, Psal. 2. 6. and in all his benefits, as Redemption and Salvation. That in Isai. 53. is a most pregnant testimony in our justification by faith, verse 11. And both old and new Testament prescribe the same holiness, obedience, and love to God, and our neighbour. They differ indeed in the clearness of Revelation, not in the substance of the doctrine. The Gospel takes off the veil, and lets us see the mysteries of Salvation more clearly. Now the argument is evident, that if the doctrine of salvation be the same in both, then both are to be searched.

III. Because all the Scriptures, both of old and new Testament, were written for the use, and good of Christians. The commands of the Law for our practise, as our Saviour told that Lawyer, Luke 18. 26, 28. How readest thou in the law? The promises for our comfort, as that promise which was peculiar to Joshua, chap. 1. 5. is repeated to all Christians, Heb. 1. 3. 5. The threatnings and judge-

ments for our example and terrour : as the Apostle speaking of the judgements which fell upon the Israelites, 1 Cor. 10. 6, 11, 12. So the types ; observe how our Saviour applies the type of the *brazen serpent* to his own death, John 3. 14. and that for the comfort and support of our faith, verse 15. That, as he, who looked upon the *brazen serpent*, was healed of the stings of the *fiery serpents* ; so they, that look up to Christ by a true faith, are healed of the *spiritual wounds* made by sin and Satan.

I V. Because of the excellencie of all Scripture, which the Apostle fully describes to us in 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. What are usefull as children to know ; what may make us wise to salvation ; what is profitable for doctrine to inform us ; for reproof to reclaim us ; for correction to reform ; for instruction to guide us, and furnish us unto every good work. This the Apostle affirms universally of all Scripture, not of this, or that part of it ; therefore of the old, as well as new Testament.

V. To strengthen and confirm the doctrine of the new Testament ; to which both Christ and the Apostles oft send Christians, and blame them for their ignorance in them, Luke 24. 25. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken, &c. Therefore it was the constant practise of Christ and his Apostles to assert their authoritie, and confirm their doctrines by the old Testament ; as in the Text here : and he grounds these Jews unbelief upon their not believing Moses, verse 46, 47, For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me : But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words ? Where Christ confirms his doctrine by Moses, who wrote of him. This was the Apologie S. Paul made for himself, and his doctrine, in Acts 26. 22. So our Saviour proves the doctrine of the resurrection by Moses, Matth. 22. 31. and the doctrine of his sufferings and resurrection, Luke 24. 44, 45. And the truth is, much of Gospel-doctrine can neither be understood, nor proved without the old Testament : as that of the Israelites in 1 Cor. 10. 1, 2, 3, 4. whence should Christians understand that, but out of the historie of Moses, of the Manna, the cloud, the sea, and the rock ; and especially, the epistle to the Hebrews without an exact knowledge of the legal sacrifices, priesthood and the like ; and the lives of the Patriarchs mentioned, Heb. 11.

VI. And lastly, To convince the Jews of the truth of Christ our Messiah, and satisfie Christians in their temptations concerning it : as the fulfilling of the Prophecies, the realizing of the Types concerning Christ. This Apollos found to be the most convincing way to confute the Jews, Acts 18. 28. And there is no other possible way to effect



effect this: for the *New Testament* they reject. *Reason* is no competent judge, and cannot fathom the depths and mysteries concerning Christ, nor judge of the *true Messiah*; nor can you convince them by the *miracles of Christ*, for they deny them, or else impute them to *Beelzebub*. If we would convince them then, we must build upon some *Principles*, which they grant, otherwise they deny the whole: therefore the only way to convince them is, to shew the *conformitie and agreement* of all Christs *doings and sufferings* to what the *Prophets* of old foretold of the *true Messiah*. Which course our Saviour himself took to prove himself the *true Messiah*, Luke 24. 44. and therefore the search of the old Testament is much conducive to the *strengthening of our faith in Christ* against the Jews. For when we consider the exact Prophecies of the time of *Christs coming*, Gen. 49. 10. and *while the temple stood*, Hag. 2. 7. *the place of his birth*, by Micah, chap. 5. verse 2. *born of a virgin*, Isai. 7. 14. *the miracles to be wrought by him*, Isai. 35. 5, 6. *his passion and sufferings*, Isai. 53. these are sufficient, when we finde them so punctually fulfilled in Christ, to *strengthen our faith* in him, and to convince the Jews of their desperate unbelief: therefore those, who deny Christians the use of the old Testament, rob them of their weapons, whereby they should contend for the faith, and fight against the enemies of Christ, the Jews.

Fourthly, *The grounds of this search.*

And these I shall reduce to these four heads.

I. *The Scripture-fulness and sufficiencie*: and this is clear in the words of the Text: *In them you may have the knowledge of Christ, and eternal life*:

Where we may consider,

1. It is a *full and perfect foundation of faith*, as containing all things *necessary to be believed*, either expressly, or by convincing, and undeniable consequence. So full and perfect it is, that it needeth not to be ckeked out with *unwritten traditions*, or *presended enthusiasmes*, and *revelations*. That *tradition*, which brings down, and conveys Scripture-truth to us through the *successive ages* of the Church, we cannot cast out, but acknowledge as an eminent instance, and testimony of Gods Providence: and in this sense the Church is called *στήλη καὶ θεμελίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας*, 1 Tim. 3. 15. *the pillar and ground of truth*. *In sensu forensi*, &c. Not that it contributes *authority* to them. And in this sense *S. Augustines Non credidissent* may go for good and currant Divinitie, because we could not have had them else. so for *revelation*; we acknowledge a *spiritual revelation to understand*, which the Apostle prays for, Ephes. 1. 17. but any thing additional to Scripture-truth, we reject, as detracting from the wisdom of

God, and his revealed truth. Observe we what the Apostle saith, *Gal. 1.18. If we or an angel from heaven preach any other doctrine.* He does not say, *Contra, against*, but *præter, beside*, saies *Paræus*. Here is enough to bring you to salvation; else *S. John* was out, who tells us, *These things are written that you might believe, and believing might have life, John 20.31.* and if not sufficient, we may say, as the disciples, *Matth. 26. 8. To what purpose all this?* but when God himself sends us, *To the Law, and to the Testimony*, *Isai. 8. 20.* and *Abraham* sends the rich man's brethren to *Moses*, and the *Prophets*, *Luke 16. 29.* it intimates that here is enough, which if known and practised, is able to keep them out of hell.

2. *A full and perfect rule of righteousness.* No duty, which can concern any man in any relation, either to God or man, but you may have full direction for it in the Scripture. Those three words of the Apostle speak the whole duty of a Christian, *σωπρότως, δικαίως, and εὐσεβῶς, soberly, righteously, and godly*, *Tit. 2.11,12.* When the Lawyer came to tempt our Saviour with that question, *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* our Saviour sends him to the Scripture; *What is written in the law? How readest thou?* Observe we what *Wisdom* saith, *Prov. 1.9. My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee: Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgement, and equitie, yea, every good path.* Art thou a Magistrate? Scripture tells thee how thou must rule, in *2 Sam. 23. 3. He, that ruleth over men, must be just, ruling in the fear of God.* Art thou a Father? Scripture directs thee in that relation to thy children, *To bring them up in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord, Ephes. 6.4.* Art thou a child? Scripture tells thee how to carrie thy self in that relation, *Ephes. 6. 1, 2. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right, &c.* Art thou a servant? Scripture tells thee how to behave thy self in that condition, *Ephes. 6. 5, 6. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, &c.* Art thou a Master of a family? Scripture shews thee how to behave thy self in that relation, *Ephes. 6.9. And ye, Masters, do ye the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, &c.* In a word, here is direction for every Christian in every condition and relation, in which the Scripture is able to make him thoroughly perfect, *2 Tim. 3. 17.* Nay, it is so perfect a rule, that the most specious observances, and most glorious performances; and most exact works, are no way acceptable unto God, if not commanded in, and regulated by this word. They may have *λόγον σοφίας καὶ ἐπιλογημάτων, a shew of wisdom in will-worship*, as the Apostle speaks, *Coloss. 2. 23. to the pleasing of men, but not to the glory of God.* God gave  
Moses



Moses a pattern for making the Tabernacle, and David of the Temple : God hath set us a *perfect rule* of worship and holiness in his word, and nothing pleaseth him, but what is *according to that rule*. When our Saviour told the woman of Samaria, John 4. 22. *We know what we worship* : We, that is, the Jews : the ground sure was, because the Jews had a *particular appointment* of God for their worship, which the Samaritans had not. Therefore nothing must be imposed upon Christians, as obligatory to conscience (though something for order, and decency, 1 Cor. 14. 40.) as Divine commands, or as the immediate worship of God, or as duties essentially necessary in order to salvation. This is justly abhorred, as the Tyranny of the Church of Rome, and as an infringement of Christian libertie, and as a detracting from the perfection of the word of God. *Non ex arbitrio Deo serviendum est, sed ex imperio*. What Tertullian saith of the Heathen worship, I shall say of all will-worship, which is besides the word of God : *Ex religione superstitio compingitur, & eo irreligiosior, quanto Ethnicus paratior*. Men in this case are laboriously superstitious, and take a great deal of pains to be irreligious. It seems to be a strange expression, Hos. 8. 14. *Israel hath forgotten his maker, and buildeth temples* ; but sure the reason is, because God had appointed but *one Temple*. To be righteous without, or beyond the word of God, is to be righteous over-much and to make our selves over-wise, indeed wiser then God himself : which is forbidden, Eccles. 7. 16. *Be not righteous over-much, neither make thy self over-wise : why shouldest thou destroy thy self?* To offer to God observances, not prescribed in his word, is but with Nadab and Abihu to offer *strange fire* unto the Lord, Levit. 10. 1. *strange*, because God had not commanded it. The use whereof, before we pass further, shall be,

First, *An encouragement to search*. What encouragement must it be to men to dig in a mine, when they may finde a *fulness* of what may supply all their *necessities* : there is such a *fulness* in *Scripture-mines*. Doeſt thou want *information in matters of faith* ? Here is a *fulness of Saving truth*. Or, doeſt thou want *direction* for thy *life*, and *walking with God* ? here is a *perfect rule of holiness*.

Secondly, When you have searched it, *walk according to this rule*. Take the word of God to regulate your lives by ; this is an evidence and note of a true, upright, sincere Christian, to take the word of God as his rule. So David describes them, Psal. 119. 1. *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord* ; that is a note, that they are undefiled, upright, and sincere. This evidenced *Jobs* uprightness, Job 23. 10, 11, 12. And yet how few walk

walk by this rule : some by *the fashions of the world, custome, and example of others, education, the invention of men, and the like :* but *David* had another rule, *Psal 119. 113. I hate vain thoughts, but thy law I love.* And there is a new, lately unheard of, generation, now start up, who neglecting the Scriptures pretend to be wholly led and guided by a *light within them.* Let us (if you think it worth the while) examine this opinion, and I think it may be confuted sufficiently by *Mat. 6. 23. If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness ?* Whence these things are obvious to be collected.

1. *That it is possible the light within a man may be darkness :* as the light, which the Heathens had within them, was, who had *their understanding darkned,* *Ephes. 4. 18.* and as the light of every natural man is, *1 Cor. 2. 14 :*

2. *That if it be so, it is a miserable darkness.* Το οὐκ ὄντως ὥσων; *How great is that darkness ?* that is, he that followeth such a light is in a lamentable, deplorable condition ; as he that followeth the light of some Meteor in the night, which leads him into ditches.

3. *This light within* (as being every mans pretence, and in most men a false light, and in one contrary to another) *must be tryed :* and then presently, it supposeth some certain rule, by which it must be tryed, (otherwise, we shall never be secured from delusion and error) and this rule can be no other, then the *infallible word of God.* All that light is darkness, which is not lighted at the Lamp of Scripture : so the Prophet *Isaiah* tells us expressly, *Isai. 8. 20. If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* Therefore as *David,* so all Christians should walk by that light, *Psal. 119. 105.*

4. If this opinion supposeth a light naturally set up in every mans soul, which by following its direction may bring them to heaven, then *this is plain down right Pelagianisme,* and speaks the grace of God needless, and tells God that he was at an unnecessary expence of wisdom and mercy, when he gave us Scripture, which the Apostle tells us is *onely able to make us wise unto salvation,* in *2 Tim. 3. 15.*

5. *God hath nowhere commanded us to walk by any such rule, as a light within.* By the Prophet *David* he sends us to his word, *Psal. 119. 9. Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way, by taking heed according to thy word :* and *S. Paul* would have all walk by the same rule, *Phil. 3. 16.*

6. Suppose it a true law and light, an effect of regeneration, yet not a rule, because imperfect : for still the Prophet remits us to that law written in the volume of the book of God, *Psal. 40. 7, 8.* and by it,



it, it does evidently appear, that there is no *law* or *light* within the heart, to be accounted of, but what is agreeable with, and con-  
 nant to the law *written in the volume of the book*. But however, be it  
 what light it will be, which these pretend to walk by; I shall de-  
 monstrate to you, that those are not in *the light*, but in *darkness*,  
 from 1 *John* 2.8,9, 10. And certainly into the number of those,  
 whom the Apostle there mentions, it is no uncharitableness to put  
 these, whose constant practise is to spit hell and damnation in  
 every mans face, though such as walk holily and unblame-  
 ably.

But you will say, *Is not every man concerned to follow the light,*  
*and inward guidance of his own conscience?* I answer, No, unless his  
 conscience be rightly informed, and regulated by the word of  
 God. For conscience is but *Regula regulata*: and though he can-  
 not disobey a *false light* of conscience without sin, so nor follow it  
 without sin neither: so that the obligation, which an erroneous  
 conscience lays upon a man, is not to act contrary to it; but he  
 ought to get that false light extinguished, and his conscience bet-  
 ter informed, and a true light set up from the word of God. Not-  
 withstanding this therefore, and all other pretended lights or rules,  
 contrary to, or besides this: I shall close this argument with that of  
 the Apostle, *Gal. 6. 16. As many as walk according to this rule, Peace be*  
*on them, and the Israel of God.*

The second argument or ground for *Scripture-search* is  
*Scripture plainness and perspicuity*. It is the desire and plot of the  
 Church of *Rome*, to fasten an imputation of obscurity upon the  
 Scripture, that hereby she may with the more plausible pretence  
 exalt *Peters* pretended successor in the infallible chair, as an un-  
 erring interpreter; and also discourage the people from reading  
 them, as perswading them, that the treasure lies too deep for them  
 to finde, and therefore it is to no purpose for them to search: but  
 this is to bring a false report upon the Scripture, as the spies did up-  
 on the *land of Canaan*. All truths necessarie to salvation are plain-  
 ly laid down in Scripture: whence the Scripture is so oft compa-  
 red to a *light*; as in *Psal. 119.* and *Prov. 6.* Indeed, here we must  
 distinguish between the *mysteriousness* and *obscurity* of the things re-  
 vealed, and the manner of the revelation. Scripture-mysteries in-  
 deed are obscure and deep, in which respect *S. Peter* observed *Αποκρυ-  
 φτα*, *some things hard to be understood*, in *S. Pauls* epistles, 2 *Pet.*  
*3. 16.* but the revelation of these mysteries are plain to those that  
 use the means; as *devout prayer, serious meditation, frequent read-  
 ing*, and the like. This is that, which *David* saith, *Psal. 119. 129.*  
*Thy testimonies are wonderfull; there is the mystery: but in verse*

*Nota continetur fidei necessarium, quod Scriptura per sensum litterarum alicubi non manifestè tradit. Aquin. p. 1. q. 1. a. 10.*

130. *The entrance of thy word giveth light*; there is the perspicuity. Some things are less plain *ob futuritionem*, because they *foresell things to come*, as Prophecies; and some *ob majestatem*, for the loftiness of them, as, to instance; The mystrie of the Trinity is incomprehensible, yet most plainly revealed in 1 John 5. 7. what greater mystery then for God to take flesh? for a childe to be born of a virgin? yet these most clearly revealed in Scripture: 1 John 1. 14. and the other, Luke 2. 6, 7. Thus that, which is *obscurely insinuated* in one place, is *clearly revealed* in another, at least in those things that be absolutely necessary to salvation; for to *this very end it was written*, John 20. 31. Yet Scriptures are dark, and obscure as to us.

1. Because of *our pride*: and though God be said to *resist the proud*, yet he teaches the *humble*, Psal. 25. 9.

2. Because of *mens unbelief*. 2 Cor. 4. 3. *The Gospel is hid to them that are lost*. So that while men are in a state of unregeneracy, they are (amidst all their acquired knowledge) in the dark, as to any true saving knowledge of *Scripture-mysteries*; they have no relish of these things. A carnal eye cannot see those things which *eye hath not seen*, they being *the things of the Spirit*; therefore Christ counsels us to buy of him *eye-salve*, Revel. 3. 18. without which we can see but little. The cloud was light to the *Israelites*, but dark to the *Egyptians*: so is the word of God, light to the true *Israelites*; that is, believers, but dark to unbelievers; the dark side of the cloud is towards them, who are conversant onely in the letter.

3. Because of *our weakness and infirmity*. The mysteries of the Gospel are profound; our capacities but shallow: we may say of them, as the woman of Samaria said of *Jacobs well*, John 4. *It is deep, and we have not to draw with*.

4. Because of *our curiosity*; as not content to know onely what God hath revealed.

5. Because of *our idleness and carelesnes in searching*. *Difficultas non est ex re ipsa, sed ex nostra oscitantia*, saies *Paraus*. He that rides post cannot take a map of the countrey he rides through: so he that makes too much hast in reading the Scriptures cannot take an exact account of them. To the best, by reason of the remainders of their natural blindness, it is not so plain, as it is in it self; therefore Scripture is more perspicuous to some, then to others: some are better scholars then others in this school, according to the means of *grace* God hath bestowed upon them, Ephes. 4. 7. and according to the *diversity* of the Spirit working in *opening their eyes*: but they who understand most, have reason to say with the Apostle,

*We*



*We know but in part, 1 Cor. 13. 9. and to pray with David, Psal. 119.*

18. *Open thou mine eyes.*

The use of this will be two-fold.

First, *Here we learn the unexcusableness of mens ignorance of Scripture.* Thou canst not pretend, that it doth not concern thee; for Christ hath bidden thee, *search it*: nor yet make the obscurity of it a plea, for all saving truths lies obvious and plain in it. There is indeed *strong meat* for *grown Christians*; but here is *milk* too for *Babes* in knowledge: here are mysteries to exercise the *acute* wits, depths for the *profoundest* judgements: but what may make thee *wise to salvation* is so plain, that a man of the *meanest* capacity may apprehend it: therefore (especially, amidst so many means of knowing it, as publick reading, and preaching) the ignorance of it in any is inexcusable.

Secondly, *Pray to God for the Spirit to be your teacher in these Gospel-mysteries*: that you may all *be taught of God*, as it is in *John 6. 45.* Without this you will be in the dark, and grope at noon-day. The Sun is most perspicuous, yet we cannot see it without its own light: the *things of the Spirit* revealed in Scripture are clear and perspicuous in themselves, but will not be so to us, without the *light of the Spirit*. There is indeed an *external* perspicuity of Scripture in the words; this may be made out to the worst of men by the improvement of natural abilities, and by accomplishment of Arts; nay, the devils may have a clear understanding of this: but then there is an *internal* perspicuity of Scripture, evidenced to the soul by the enlightning of the Spirit of God shining into the heart, so irradiating the minde with a Divine light, that it sees through the veil of the letter, and discovers the mystery of the word. This light conveys an experimental taste, and a sweet relish of the truths of the word of God. In a word, the Scripture is plain, though we want light to see it; the Sun may shine, though a blinde man cannot perceive it: but now the Spirit brings a suitable light into the soul, proportioned to these Scripture-truths, which were indited and can only be evidenced by the Spirit, in *2 Cor. 4. 6.* and Prayer is the way to come by the Spirit, *Luke 11. 13.* *How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Spirit to them that ask him.*

The third argument for *Scripture-search* is *Scriptures authority*, which is divine and infallible. *S. Paul* affirms, that it is of *divine inspiration*, in *2 Tim. 3. 16.* and it is said to be a *more sure word of prophesie*, by *S. Peter*, *2 Pet. 1. 19.* And herein I shall demonstrate this one thing,

*That these Scriptures are the word of God.*

That these Scriptures are the word of God, I shall not trouble you with

with a multitude of arguments to evince it, but yet I could not wholly omit it; because all, who do profess it, do not really and fully believe it (as I shall evidence to you anon) and the faith of many Christians, through the strength of Satans temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, may sometimes doubt of it: that I may therefore convince some, and strengthen others, I shall present to you these considerations.

I. *The testimony of the Church is not the first or chief ground, nor is it a sufficient argument of that faith whereby we believe the Scriptures to be the word of God.* Into this indeed the Church of Rome doth ultimately resolve its faith. Bellarmine openly professes that, *He would believe the Bible no more then the Alcoran, if it were not for the testimony of the Church.* It is true, the outward testimony of the Church may be a motive, or a means of our belief of the Scripture, for so she is called *the pillar and ground of truth*, to hold it forth, and declare it; as the pillar holds forth the Princes Proclamation, but adds no authoritie to it. It may inform us of the truth, but not perswade us of the truth. The Church hath the charge of Scripture, *inasmuch as the Oracles of God being committed to her*, (as it is said of the Jewish, *Rom. 3. 2.*) as a *Trustee* of Divine truth, to maintain, uphold, expound, and declare Scripture; but not the first ground of our belief of it. As the Queen of *Sheba* believed the report of *Solomons* wisdom by others, but more when she heard it her self: or as the *Samaritans* believed, because of the report of the woman, but more when they heard him, *John 4. 30, 40.* The Church may hand the Scriptures to us, and we may believe them by, but not for the testimony of it. Or, as a mother may shew the childe the sun, and tell him, *that is the sun*, but yet the sun manifests its self by its own light: so the Church may tell us, this is Scripture, but it is impossible, that the ultimate resolution of a divine faith of *supernatural truths* should be made into any humane, and so consequently fallible, and uncertain testimony, when as we are to judge of the *true Church* by the Scripture. Nor can this be a conviction to any, that the Scriptures are the word of God: for either it must be to believers; and to them it is unnecessary, for they have already effectually entertained it upon other grounds, *viz. The inward evidences of the word, and Testimony of the Spirit*: and it cannot be to unbelievers, for they reject the Church as well as the Scripture; and therefore they must be convinced of the *true Church*, before they will admit its testimony: and of this there is no other possible means to convince them, then by the Scriptures, which must be first evidenced unto them: Therefore,

II. They



I. *There are in Scripture sufficient evidences and convictions, even to ingenuous reason, that it is the word of God.* And this is necessary; for though, after any testimony appears to be Divine, reason must not be suffered to dispute and question the thing so attested: yet I cannot see, why reason should not be used, as an instrument or means to evidence such a Revelation to be divine; otherwise (though I may be otherwise convinced my self) it is impossible to convince an Heathen, or gainsayer, that *this is the word of God.* Our faith is not irrational, and though the things revealed be above reason, yet that it is supernaturally revealed, must be evidenced to reason; otherwise my belief is rash, precipitate, and irrational; nor can I give a reason of the hope that is in me, as the Apostle requires, 1 Pet. 3. 15. Therefore (omitting those which I conceive less evincing) I shall lay down these few considerations to evidence this.

I. Consider the sublimities of, and mysteriousness of the things revealed in Scripture; such as the most prying reason could never search into, nor the most improved, raised parts and abilities ever reach; such as the Philosophers never dreamt of: such is the fall of man, and our corruption by it, of which if the Philosophers had some ruder notions, yet the means of mans sin and misery, viz. by the wilfull transgression of that Covenant, made between God and man, of not eating of the tree of knowledge, &c. this they were wholly ignorant of; and much less could reason fathom the depth of that Wisdom and Mercy which Scripture discovers in mans recovery by Christ; this is a depth which the very Angels desire, *David saith, in 1 Pet. 1. 12. to look earnestly into.* That Apostatized, fallen, miserable man should again be brought to life by the death of the only Son of God; and that in a way of such unspeakable wisdom, and security to all the attributes of God, with such a full reconciliation of justice and mercy, is a myserie reason can scarce apprehend now it is revealed, much less discover, and finde out at first. So God's entering into Covenant with lapsed man; an Unity in Trinity; Redemption by the blood of Christ; Regeneration by the Spirit (you know Nicodemus's reason was non-pluss'd here, with a *Quomodo?* How can this be, John 3.) Resurrection of the body, being crumbled into dust: A last judgement, before the tribunal of that Christ, who was crucified here: these are things which the eye of reason could never have discerned, and which the most acute profound Philosophers knew nothing of.

What Plato knew of God, it is very probable, he had from Moses, of whom he was very studious; if we will believe Clemens Alexandrinus. St. Augustin confesseth, when he had diligently perused Pla-

St. August. l. 7.  
C. 21. confes3.

to, he found nothing of our *miserie by sin*, and *recovery by Christ*: nothing of the *blotting out the hand-writing of Ordinances by the blood of Christ*. *Hoc illæ literæ non habent*, saith he. He could finde none there crying out with S. Paul, *Quid faciet miser homo?* &c. What shall miserable man do? Who shall deliver him? None crying out, *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ*: yet saith he, *Hæc mihi in viscerabantur miris modis, cum minimum Apostolorum tuorum legerem*, &c. Lord, these truths were incorporated in me, when I read the least of thy Apostles. And truly, one end of Gods giving us Scripture was to supply the defect of reason. This consideration will yet be more valid, if you consider whom God was pleased to make use of, as instruments, to convey these mysteries to us: not an eloquent Tully, profound Plato; but Amos an *Heardsman*, David a *Shepherd*, Paul a *Tent-maker*, and many of the Apostles poor *fishermen*; men no waies enabled by acquired parts. Moses indeed was *learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, Acts 7. 22. but there he could not learn the Law and Truths of God, where Idolatry was so much overspread. So Paul was *brought up at the feet of Gamaliel*; but there he did not learn the mysteries of the Gospel, but during that time he thought himself bound to blaspheme the truth, and to persecute the Professours of the Gospel, which himself afterwards preached. Matthew, a Publican, made a Pen-man of the Scripture. All which speak as the admirable wisdom and omnipotent power of Gods grace, in conquering their hearts to a closing with the Gospel, so Gods revealing these things unto them, and in an extraordinary manner furnishing them, and acting them by his Spirit, to write the Scriptures.

2. The exactness of Scripture-holiness: such as you shall meet with in no humane writings; *saith purifying the heart, working by love*. What exact patterns and examples does Scripture hold forth of Purity and Holiness? *Enoch walking with God: Abraham the friend of God: and David a man after Gods own heart*. What strict laws does it prescribe? whereas Humane laws tolerate some sins, this discovers the *wages of the least sin to be death*, Rom. 6. 23. whereas other Religions are fitted with *Fleshly liberties*, to gratifie mens corruptions (witness *Mahomet's Alcoran* indulging a libertie to the flesh) this commands those pieces of holiness, which are most contrarie, and repugnant to our natural corruptions; such as *self-denial, taking up the cross*, &c. It discovers Original sin, and man by the guilt thereof *liable to the challenge of God, the censure of the law*, in the first moment of his being: and that the *least sin* (every idle word) *must be accounted for*, Matth. 12. 36. Had it been an Hu-

mane



mane invention, you shall have found the flesh gratified; as all Religions in the world have some way or other to do it. *Non habent* (saith S. Augustin of Plato) *ista Pagina vultum pietatis huius, lachrymarum confessionis, sacrificium tuum, spiritum contribulatum, cor contritum: nemo ibi cantat, Nonne Deo subdita erit anima mea?* that is, *All the Heathen Philosophie hath not so much as a shew of this piety, the tears of a broken heart, and a contrite spirit, which is thy sacrifice: no man here crys out with David, Let all that is within me praise his holy name,* Psal. 103.1. The principles of morallitie might deck and garnish the outward man, but Scripture holiness onely repairs and renews the soul, commands the very thoughts, and curbs the very first irregular motions of the heart. In a word, this onely transforms the soul into the image of God from glorie to glorie by the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3.18.

3. The excellency of Gospel-promises; such as Philosophers never hinted: such as the apprehensions of man cannot comprehend now they are revealed, much less could they imagine, or invent. It would be infinite to enlarge; I shall therefore instance but in two: *Ease to troubled, wearied souls: Nemo ibi audit, Venite ad me, qui laboratis,* saith S. Augustine, speaking of the writings of Philosophers. He could not among all the Platonick Philosophers finde such an expression; so comfortable a promise, as this, *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden.* No sanctuary for troubled souls, but the blood of Christ, which this Scripture onely discovers. *Isai. 40.1,2. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, &c.* And another Promise in *Isai. 43.2. I will be with thee when thou passest through the fire, and through the water:* not such a Promise in all the writings of men: a Promise of Gods gracious presence here, and then the Promise of eternal rest in another world. The Heathens might dream of an *Elysium*; Mahomet promise a confluence of sensual carnal delights in green meadows to his followers; but an happiness made up of an eternal enjoying God by vision and love, is a thing their reason could never reach, but must certainly be a Divine Revelation, as being that which Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor can enter into the heart of man to conceive of.

4. The nature and event of Scripture prophetes: which are such as the eye of omniscience onely can reach, as being beyond the foresight of the most perfect creature. Moses foretold, the seed of the woman should break the serpents head, much above three thousand years, ere it was accomplished. So Jacobs prophetie of the coming of Shiloh upon the departure of the Scepter from Judah, Gen. 49. fell out accordingly, a little before Christs birth, when the Jews were subjected

to

to the power of the Romans. Thus all the Prophets foretelling *the calling of the Gentiles*, a thing so strange, that when accomplished, many did not *understand* it, and more were *offended at it*. *Isaiah* prophesied the captivitie, and destruction of Jerusalem, even then, when the kingdome was in a flourishing condition, both which afterward fell out. Thus *Josiah's* name and actions were foretold three hundred years before his birth, *1 Kings* 13. 2. and *Cyrus's* an hundred years before his birth, *Isai.* 45. 1, 2. &c. And what doth all this speak but a Divine revelation. Man may see some things future, as they are in their causes, but to foretel such future events, as are merely dependant upon the Divine will, such as these are, is onely proper to God. *Testimonium divinitatis, veritas divinationis*, saies *Tertullian*, *The certainty of foretelling is a sure Testimony of Divinity*. And so we finde that in *Isai.* 41. 22, 23. the foretelling such futurities is made a distinction of the true God, from all false ones.

5. Consider how these Scriptures have gained authority and acceptance from the world by quite contrary means to other writings: not by finfull compliances with the humours, and lusts of men (which hath much promoted the *Alcoran* of *Mahomet*) for these it impartially and severely taxes, and condemns: not insinuated into mens mindes by the pomp and pleasantness of Rhetorick: (no adornings with the flowers of Rhetorick, to make them seem gratefull to the world) but by a plain stile, and homely expression. It gains acceptance by the *mysteriousness* of the things more, then *eloquence of the stile*: so the Apostle speaks, *1 Cor.* 2. 4. *My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of mans wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power*. It is the custome of men to flatter Great ones by a complemental dedication, and thereby to gain honour and repute to their writings: but observe the dedications of the Scriptures, they are *to the poor, condemned, scattered Saints at Corinth*, and elsewhere; so *1 Pet.* 1. 1. Humane writings gain acceptance by the command and Patronage of Great ones: as *Mahomet's* upheld by a continued war; *Nebuchadnezzar* makes a *fiery furnace* for them who will not bow down to the Image he sets up: but here it was quite contrary, a *furnace, fiery tryals*, and *persecutions* prepared for them, who did receive, and profess the word, under many Heathen Emperours, yet it thrived, and the professors thereof multiplied, not withstanding all opposition, and disadvantages. Which certainly, even in the conviction of reason, speaks *the hand of God* stretched out to preserve his word, and bringing in many to the acknowledgement of it: that notwithstanding the opposition these Scriptures have met with from persecuting Emperours, cunning He-



Hereticks, and at first promulged onely by a few poor fishermen, sent out with that commission, *Matth. 28. 19.* to preach a crucified Saviour to an obstinate world: that notwithstanding all this, I say, it should be preserved, and propagated, speaks it from God, as *Gammaliel* a Pharisee argued, *Acts 5. 38, 39.* Had it not been thus from God, surely God would long since have stopped the mouths of us, Ministers of it, as the greatest deluders and impostours in the world (whom yet he hath oft miraculously preserved and encouraged) and have countenanced the opposers of it; whom yet his severest judgements have overtaken: witness *Antiochus*, *Julian*, and the rest. That the Professours of the Gospel should be as lambs among wolves, yet not devoured; that persecution should be *illicebra magis secta*, as *Tertullian* saies: and that it should thrive by opposition, this speaks it surely to be from God.

*Tertull. Apol.*  
cap. 49.

6. Consider the confirmation of this word by miracles, such as created power could never reach. The Apostle indeed foretels the coming of Antichrist to be with many signs and wonders, *2 Thessal. 2. 9.* yea, but lying wonders; but Scripture-miracles are such, as can be effected onely by the arm of omnipotency: as, *Dividing the sea*, *curing one born blinde*, *Feeding thousands with a few loaves and fishes*, *Raising the dead from a seiled corruption*, as *Lazarus*: these are such as Antichrist, I think, never pretended to: therefore, as the Magicians, when they could not do the like miracles, as *Moses* did, cryed out, *This is the finger of God*, *Exod. 8. 19.* so we here, *This is the truth, the word of God.* God would never certainly lay out his power, or work miracles to confirm, or seal to a lye. At *John 5. 36.* our Saviour urgeth this as an argument, why his person and doctrine should be entertained.

7. Consider Satans enmity against the Scripture. His great design is, (if possible to keep men from the letter of the Scripture) to hinder men from an effectual entertainment of the Gospel: and therefore hath stirred up, in all ages almost, Persecutours to oppose it, and Hereticks to delude and wrest it. It strikes at, and threatens ruine to his kingdom, therefore he endeavours his utmost to subvert it; and therefore all the designs now on foot against the Scripture, you must look upon them, as the plots of Satan. You may read a piece of Philosophy, History, or any Humane writing, and finde little, or no reluctancie against the entertainment of it. Now, why should not men bring as ready a belief to Scripture, or entertain the truth of it, when they read it? surely it is from the Devil, tempting them to unbelief: even because the God of this world hath blinded their eyes, as the Apostle speaks *2 Cor. 4. 4.* *Tertullian* gathered the goodness of the Gospel from this, *Quod à Nerone damnatum*, be-

cause it was so persecuted by Nero: and we the excellencie of the Scriptures from this, because the Devil so much malignes it.

8. Consider how it advances God, and debases man. It gives God the glory of all his Attributes and Works: both in the work of Creation and Redemption. It gives him the glorie of what we have and do: *What hast thou, that thou hast not received?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. there in what we have, and in what we do, S. Paul acknowledges 1 Cor. 13. 10. *I laboured more abundantly, yet not I, but the grace of God within me.* It tells us, that of our selves we are not able to think a good thought, 2 Cor. 3. 5. yet that we are able to do all things through Christ, Phil. 4. 13. Now in Humane writings men seek their own applause and credit, and this moves them to write; but these writings the glory of God, which our Saviour more then once makes the badge of the truth of his doctrine, *John 7. 19. and John 8. 50. &c.* Scripture advances God, as the first cause and last end.

And thus having finished the Doctrine, I proceed to the Fifth General,

The Application of it.

Use First, See here the cruel Antichristian tyranny of the Church of Rome, which forbids private Christians the use and search of the Scriptures: Antichristian surely in this; Christ bids, *Search them, for in them ye think ye have eternal life*: they forbid the search of them, for fear of Heresie and Errour. The Apostle tells us, *The Scripture is profitable*, they say, *it is pernicious*: our Saviour would have the light be set upon a candlestick, Matth. 5. 15. they put it under a bushel, and so leave the people in darknes. How much against nature is it, to with-hold milk from a childe? so much it is to with-hold the sincere milk of Gods word from his children: or to send a souldier into the field unarmed, how cruel is it? So to rob the people of this spiritual armour, this sword of the Spirit, and expose them naked to the power and fury, the delusions and stratagems of Satan. As the Philistines out of envy dealt with the wells of water, Gen. 26. 15. so do these with the Scriptures, they envy the people the water of life, therefore stop up these wells of salvation, or else throw dirt into them; so that the people can have little of the pure water, but as it is puddled with the dirt of their traditions, or Monkish and Jesuitical glosses and depravations: and being thus robbed of the compass of the Scripture, they quickly split upon the rock of errour.

Use Second, Hence we learn that they are inexcusable, who neglect this duty: whom neither the command of God, their own good and advantage, neither Religion or Policie can prevail with: but



but a few obscene Poets, or idle Romances, or ridiculous Ballads are more searched by them, then the Scriptures. *Get you Bibles* (saith S. Chrysostom) *which are the physick and medicines of your souls.* Surely, the neglect of of this is intolerable. God hath not overburthened you with Scripture. There are many things that Jesus did, which are not written, but *these are written*, John 20. 30, 31. that is *these few*. It is neither so costly nor dear, but the meanest may purchase it; nor so voluminous, but the most employed may read and search it. The motives to it (as you heard before) are weighty, and therefore the neglect of it the more dangerous. But, because many things may be pretended for the neglect hereof, I shall remove a scruple or two.

First Object. Say some, *I am unlearned, I cannot search in to it.*

Ans. To this I answer; I wish thou wert learned, and able to read thy self: but then know, thou oughtest so much the more carefully to attend, and conscienciously wait upon the publick reading of the Scripture in these publick assemblies. This hath been the *constant practise* of the Church in all ages, as is evident partly in *Luke 4, 16, 17.* and partly in *Acts 13, 15.* where you see in both places, it was the *usual custome* to have the Scriptures read in their *publick assemblies*; and after reading followed preaching. The ground whereof was, surely, as to preserve the *purity of Scripture-doctrine* in the Church; that the people, hearing the word so frequently read, might not be imposed upon by *error*, or *delusions* of men: so also for the *profit, advantage, and edification* of those, who cannot read, or search the Scriptures; and that the *preaching of the word* might come with more light and power upon their hearts. If you cannot read *your selves*, get others to read *unto you*, and be you so much the more in *prayer and meditation*.

Second Object. *I have so much employment in the world that I have no leisure to search the Scriptures. If I should privately search Scripture, and attend frequently upon the preaching of the word, it would set me behinde hand in the world, and hinder my thriving.*

Ans. I answer, This is much what the Apologie, that those made, who pretended their *farms, and oxen*, as an excuse for not coming unto the *wedding*, Matth. 22. But, *Christians*, break through your *worldly employments*, prefer God before the world, and your souls before your bodies, an *act of Religion* before all *worldly business*, and believe it, you will be no *losers* by it; God will *succeed*, and *bless* your labours more. *Never was any man a loser by his Religion.* See what God promised to the Jews, *Exod. 34. 24.* that He would *secure their land for them*, while they went up to *Jerusalem to worship* the

the Lord. And what our Saviour said to the Disciples, *Luke 22. 35. When I sent you out without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing?* Thou pretendest no leisure; the truth is, *Non parum temporis habemus, sed multum perdimus*, saies *Seneca*, Yes, we have time enough, but we loose too much of it. Thou hast no leisure for this: but, *Art thou at leisure for thy pleasures*, and not for Religion? for the world, and not for God? for shame cheat not your own souls with such vain pretences, but as thou desirest the knowledge of Christ here, and the enjoyment of Christ hereafter, be conscientious in this duty of *Searching the Scriptures*.

Use Third, *It reproves those, who believe not this truth, that the Scripture is the word of God.* But you will say, *This concerns not us, Go charge the Turks and Indians with this.* No, (my Brethren) many of our selves here are guilty of this, for though mens mouths profess it, yet their hearts deny it, as the Apostle speaks of some, *In words they profess God, but in works they deny him*, *Tit. 1. 16.* Did men really believe the corruptions of their natures, and their constant liableness unto wrath; would there be so much pride, so much confidence in sin? Did men really believe, that *of every idle word they must give an account*; would there be so much idle, frothy, ungodly, profane, lascivious talking and discourse? Did men believe the Apostle, *Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21.* that all those vices there rehearsed were *the works of the flesh*; would those sins so much abound? Did men believe that *they who did no wrong to their neighbour should enter into, and dwell in the Tabernacle of God*, *Psal. 15. 1, 5.* would there be so much oppression and extortion? Did men believe that *God will come in flaming fire to render vengeance upon all them, that know not God, and obey not his Gospel*, as in *2 Thess. 1. 8.* would there be such a contented wilfull ignorance of God? Truth, where it is effectually entertained, will have an influence upon the life. How do most men hold Gospel-truth in *unrighteousness*? as the Apostle saies, the Gentiles did *the light of nature*, *Rom. 1. 18.* so these withhold Gospel-truths: for, certainly, wickedness in the life speaks an *ineffectual entertainment of the truth*.

Use Fourth, *It condemns those who do not value and prize the Scripture.* How did the Heathens prize their Oracles? yet the generalitie of Christians do not prize *these Oracles of God*, as the Apostle calls them, *Rom. 3. 2.* Three things there are, that make this out unto us.

I. *Mens wilfull and contented ignorance of Scripture.* What things we prize, we search into. How does the Scholar pry, and search into those notions, he affects and values? So would men do, if they did value and prize the word aright; but the contrarie to this rather



ther is evident by their language, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, Job 21. 14.

II. *Mens weariness in searching the Scripture.* What things we prize, in the search of them we finde delight : but, how are men tyred at a Sermon, or Sabbath, in which the Scriptures are read ? Is not the language of those Israelites in *Amos* 8. 5. the language of too many among us ? *When will the Sabbath be ended ?* &c. Men are sooner weary of *this*, then any other book.

III. *Mens seldom discoursing of Scripture.* As they said to Peter in another case, *Matth.* 26. 73. *Thy speech bewrayeth thee* : so mens speeches bewray their want of affections to the Scriptures. The Scholar upon every occasion is discoursing of those notions, which he prizeth : but men are far more wise to discourse of the world, then of heaven, and heavenly things.

Use Fifth, *Of exhortation* : That you would endeavour to get your faith well grounded in this fundamental truth : that neither Satan tempt you, nor men dispute you out of it ; for till then

I. *Your faith will be uncertain and weak* ; as a building without a foundation ; as a ship without ballast or anchor, soon tossed and ship-wracked : and this we may think is the cause of most mens Apostacie in these declining times.

II. *Your lives will be but loose.* If you be not thoroughly convinced of your dutie of walking by Scripture-rule, you will walk at uncertainties, and so amiss.

III. *Your comforts weak, if not grounded on Scripture-promises.* This is one main reason, why mens comforts ebb and flow so much ; they are not grounded on a sure belief of Scripture ; and if once your faith in this truth waver, the foundation of your comfort must needs be shaken. For the attaining whereof I can give you no better direction, then that you *Pray earnestly for the Spirit*, that he would please

1. *To open the eyes of your minde*, illighting, and irradiating the understanding to see those arguments, and evidences of this truth, which lie in the Scriptures. So *S. Fohn* tells us, *1 Fohn* 2. 26. *These things have I written unto you, that no man seduce you.* And, without this, all other arguments will be ineffectual to the begetting of a saving and through belief of this truth. As *Agar*, when her eyes were opened, saw a well of water, *Gen.* 21. 19. so there are arguments to evince this truth sufficient in the Scriptures, but they will never be brought home to the soul with a full conviction, till the Spirit open our eyes to see them : for this is one end, why the Spirit of God is given to us and received of us, that we may know the things that are freely given unto us by the Spirit of God, as in *1 Cor.*

2. To remove that natural enmitie and prejudice, that we have against an effectual assent to the Gospel, and so sanctifie our hearts, as to make it close with, and heartily embrace it, as the truth and word of God. Truth resists our corruptions, and they it. What is the great Gospel-truth, but Christ his coming to undertake as our Jesus? this we cannot savingly assent unto, but by the Spirit, as in 1 Cor 12.3. No man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Spirit. Corruption fills the soul with prejudices against the truth. The Philosopher observes, that the *Mathematicks* (though *abstruse* in themselves) are sooner learnt by a young man *dissolute*, and that hath not tamed his *passions*, then *morality*: because those, being mere *speculations*, bring no *oppositions* to his lusts, which the *precepts* of *morality* curb and restrain. So mens corruptions and unsubdued lusts prejudice the soul against the belief of Gospel-truth, which the sanctifying work of the Spirit doth subdue and remove, and so disposes the soul for the entertainment of the truth of the Gospel: as we see in *S. Paul*, who, having his *lusts* subdued once, came to preach that Gospel, which before he had persecuted.

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FINIS.

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